MEET THE MAKERS OF *STAR WARS: SKELETON CREW*

THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE | ISSUE 229

STAR WARS INSIDER

LEGO® *Star Wars* Jabba's Sail Barge
Prize Giveaway Inside!

INTERVIEWS:

Denis Lawson
Rebel pilot Wedge Antilles

Dee Bradley Baker
Voice of the clone army

Inquisitor Countdown

Who were the most fearsome members of the Inquisitorius?

STAR WARS

THE ACOLYTE

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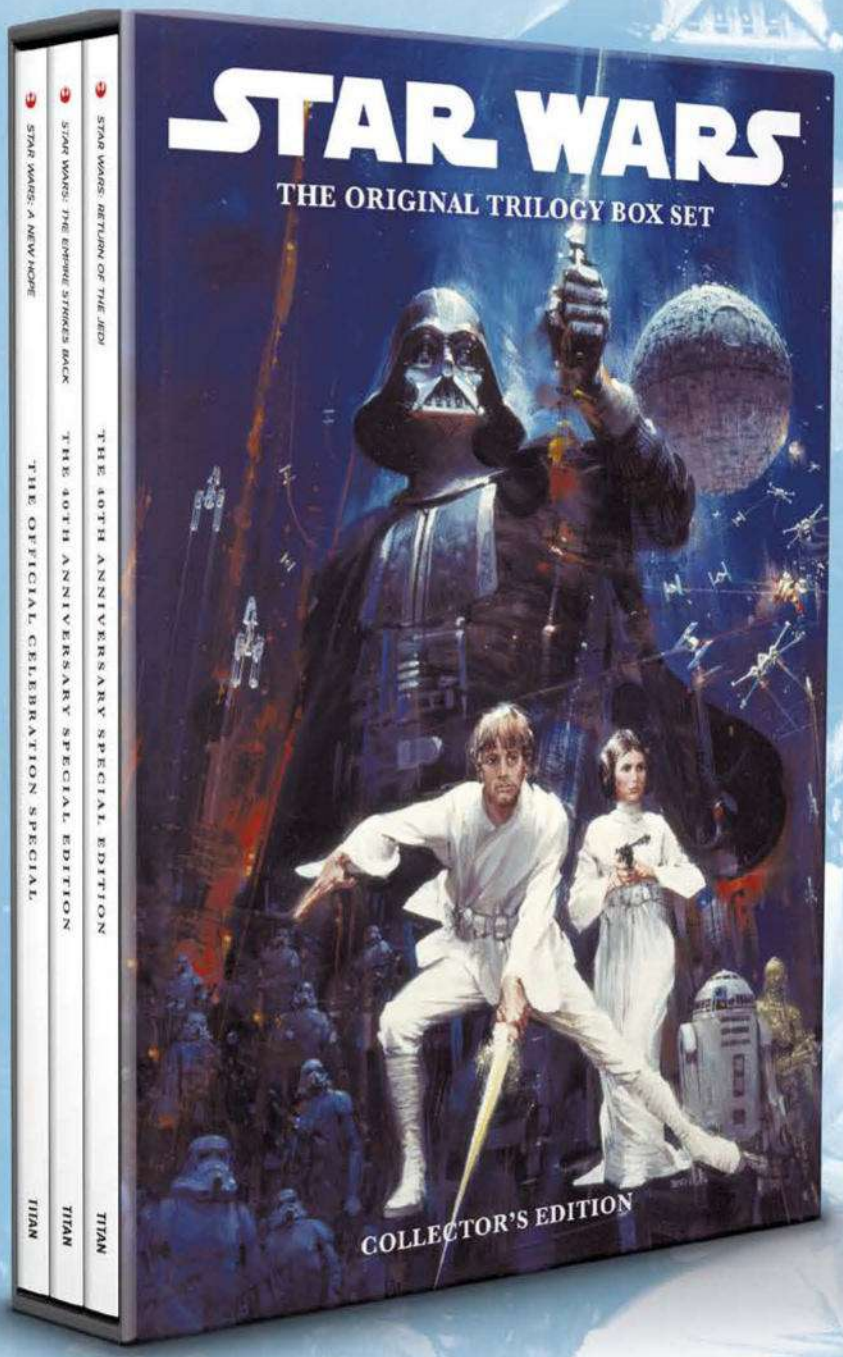

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Three hardcover books looking back at the making of the original *Star Wars* trilogy*: A New Hope, The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi*. Lavishly illustrated with rarely seen photography and art from the Lucasfilm Image Archives, featuring vintage interviews with the stars including Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford, and Carrie Fisher.

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"Hello There!"

Who's your favorite *Star Wars* hero? An obvious one, like Luke Skywalker or Leia Organa? Qui-Gon Jinn? Maybe its Ahsoka Tano or Rey?

There's an increasingly long list of alpha-types who get all the glory (and the potential for a Disney+ spinoff), but for some reason I've always identified more with the stoic figure just to the left of the screen and slightly out of focus. The instantly recognizable character who, even if they didn't get an action figure back in the day (and you had to mod a spare Luke in X-wing fighter pilot gear to make one!) was as crucial to the plot as, say, my personal fave—Wedge Antilles.

Wedge is the kind of guy I think I'd get on with if I lived in the galaxy far, far away. Someone who is in no way nonchalant when confronted by a moon-sized superweapon (what kind of maniac would be?!) A guy who politely apologizes for ducking out of a fight despite being told he's, "no use back there." A chap who will take a moment to compliment his gunner for some neat harpooning skills while tying an AT-AT in knots. Wedge is, quite literally, one of the good guys. So, I'm delighted that this issue *Insider* got to speak with the actor who turned a bit part into a *Star Wars* legend, Denis Lawson. We also talk to Dee Bradley Baker, who voiced countless clone troopers including Rex, the ultimate clone sidekick to several Jedi; while Meredith Salenger tells us about reprising her outsider role as Bariss Offee in *Tales of the Empire*.

Last, but not least, *Star Wars: Skeleton Crew* showrunners Jon Watts and Christopher Ford introduce us to an all-new bunch of heroes who may well become your new favorites. May the Force be with them.

Christopher Cooper
Editor

MEET THE CONTRIBUTORS...

Lydia Kang
@LydiaYKang
Poet, practicing physician, and author of young adult and adult fiction, Lydia's *The High Republic* novel *Cataclysm* is available now.

Tara Bennett
@TaraDBennett
Tara is a *New York Times* bestselling author, journalist, and editor, and has written numerous companion books for hit movie and television series.

John Kirk
@capjkkirk
A self-confessed popular culture nerd and regular sci-fi and film convention host, James is a teacher, journalist, and film critic.

Amy Ratcliffe
@amy_geek
Author of *Star Wars: Women of the Galaxy*, Amy is obsessed with the saga and loves to visit Disney theme parks as often as she can.

Amy Richau
@amyrichau
Amy is a regular contributor to StarWars.com, and is the author of *Star Wars: I Love You, I know: Lessons in Love and Friendship.*

Jay Stobie
@StobiesGalaxy
Writer, media consultant, and Wookiee fan, Jay is a regular *Star Wars Insider* contributor, and commentator for many sci-fi outlets.

CONTACT US

Write to us
UNITED STATES
Star Wars Insider, Titan Magazines, 2819 Rosehall Lane, Aurora, IL, 60503, U.S.A.

UNITED KINGDOM
Star Wars Insider, 144 Southwark Street, London SE1 0UP, U.K.

Email us:
starwarsinsider@titanemail.com

Call us
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Editor / Christopher Cooper
Designer / David Colderley
Group Editor / Jake Devine
Assistant Editors / Louis Yamani & Ibraheem Kazi
Art Director / Oz Browne

LUCASFILM
Senior Editor / Brett Rector
Art Director / Troy Alders
Creative Director / Michael Siglain
Asset Management / Chris Argyropoulos, Gabrielle Levenson, Bryce Pinkos, Sarah Williams, Jackey Cabrera, Shahana Alam, & Elinor De La Torre
Story Group / Pablo Hidalgo, Leland Chee, Emily Shkoukani, Phil Szostak, and Kate Izquierdo

CONTRIBUTORS
Arezou Amin, Kristin Baver, Tara Bennett, Mary Fan, Lydia Kang, John Kirk, Amy Ratcliffe, Amy Richau, Jay Stobie, and Dan Wallace.

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Lucy Goldsmith, Erich Schoeneweiss at Random House, Holly McIntosh, Joseph Taraborrelli, Andrea Towers and Jim Nausedas at Marvel Comics, Lizzy Draeger, Tracy Cannobbio, Greg Grugsby, Isabel Hinchliff Ian Kintzle, Lillian Noble, & Kylie Walker at Lucasfilm. Kevin P. Pearl, Samantha Keane, and Eugene Paraszczuk at Disney.

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STAR WARS INSIDER

LAUNCHPAD

NEWS / BOOKS / COMICS / GAMES / FASHION

Crewed Up

Star Wars: Skeleton Crew blasts off!

The latest live-action *Star Wars* series is finally here, with *Skeleton Crew* now streaming around the world on Disney+.

The show, which stars Jude Law, Ravi Cabot-Conyers, Ryan Kiera Armstrong, Kyriana Kratter, and Robert Timothy Smith, follows the journey of four kids who make a mysterious discovery on their seemingly safe home planet, then get lost in a strange and dangerous galaxy. Finding their way home—and meeting unlikely allies and enemies—will be a greater adventure than they ever imagined.

Creators and lead writers Christopher Ford and Jon Watts speak at length about the new series and its lead characters in

this issue of *Insider* (turn to page 26), with Watts saying that "I like the idea that it's an opportunity for people to see the *Star Wars* that they love, but from a fresh perspective, through the eyes of a 10-year-old kid."

Star Wars: Skeleton Crew is executive produced by Ford, Watts, Jon Favreau, Dave Filoni, Kathleen Kennedy, and Colin Wilson, and produced by Susan McNamara and John Bartnicki. Co-executive producers are Chris Buongiorno, Karen Gilchrist, and Carrie Beck.

Hyperspace Stories

Graphic novels coming in at light speed

Lucasfilm Publishing presented some upcoming gems at October's New York Comic-Con, including titles that will blast readers back to the prequel era and on to *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

Dark Horse Comics will be releasing a trio of graphic novels under the banner *Hyperspace Stories* in 2025, starring two characters from *Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith*, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this coming May. *Mace*, which centers on Jedi Master Mace Windu, is written by *The High Republic* author Justina Ireland, with a cover by Michael Cho. Cho is also the artist behind the cover for *Grievous*, which tells a new story about the Separatist general by Michael Moreci. Qui-Gon Jinn also gets his own graphic novel that explores his life as a Padawan and eventual Jedi Master, with a mysterious connection to Phase II of *The High Republic*.

Jumping forward to the sequel trilogy era, Poe Dameron and BB-8 will star in a new mini-series penned by Ethan Sacks that tracks their adventures prior to Episode VII.

Release dates were yet to be confirmed at the time this issue of *Insider* went to press, so bookmark **StarWars.com** for updates.

ROBERT WATTS

1938-2024

The *Star Wars* galaxy lost one of its founders this fall with the passing of Robert Watts, aged 86.

As production supervisor on *A New Hope*, one of Watts' many responsibilities had been to find the real-world locations that would become iconic landscapes of the saga, and his support of director George Lucas during the pressurized shoot was fundamental to getting the movie made.

Born in Great Britain in 1938, Londoner Watts enjoyed a stellar career before and after his pivotal role in the creation of *Star Wars*. Beginning as a runner, he swiftly worked his way up to production manager, and by the mid-1960s had become a second assistant director on classics including the James Bond movie *You Only Live Twice* (1967), and Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1969).

An early hire by Lucas and producer Gary Kurtz for the original film, Watts was made associate producer for *The Empire Strikes Back* (1980) and co-produced *Return of the Jedi* (1983). He was associate producer on *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981), and produced the next two Indiana Jones installments. He also produced *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* (1988), and *Alive* (1993), directed by fellow Indy alumni Frank Marshall.

Talking to *Star Wars Insider* in 2021, Watts said, "None of us knew when we made [*Star Wars*] that it was going to be this true phenomenon," adding, "A sequel was never guaranteed. George had said, 'Maybe, if this first one is a huge hit, maybe we'll make a second one.' And, well... it was, and we did! To be able to work with both George Lucas and Steven Spielberg at that point in my career, and in theirs, I just got so lucky."

Powered Up!

Classic Episode I videogame revived

Making its console and PC comeback 25 years after it was first released, *Star Wars* Episode I: Jedi Power Battles is back with a bang, courtesy of Lucasfilm Games and Aspyr.

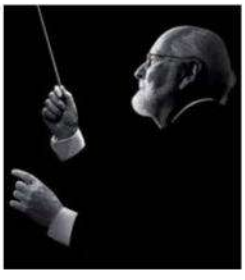
Launching on PC, PlayStation, Switch, and Xbox on January 23, 2025, the update uses the original Sega Dreamcast source code souped up with considerable gameplay enhancements, maintaining the original feel of the game while bringing it right up to date for modern gamers. Players fight their way through levels designed around scenes and locations from *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*, as selectable characters like Mace Windu, Obi-Wan Kenobi, and previously unlockable characters Darth Maul and Queen Amidala, to name a few. And for the first time ever, the game includes a lightsaber toggle enabling selectable original colors, as well as returning Cheat Codes, like Big Head and Big Foot Modes. In addition to the main campaign, the game also includes Training Rooms and a VS mode where two players can compete against each other.

Must Watch Music

Disney+ celebrates John Williams

Fans of John Williams' astonishing film scores should head to Disney+ for a fascinating biographical documentary on the legendary composer, Directed by award-winning filmmaker Laurent Bouzereau.

Music by John Williams, produced by Lucasfilm Ltd., Amblin Documentaries, and Imagine Documentaries, looks back on Williams' life from his early career as a jazz pianist to one of the most respected film composers of all time, celebrating his contributions not only to stage and screen, but to popular culture as a whole.



Featuring contributions from artists and filmmakers and including George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, Chris Martin, Ron Howard, Yo-Yo Ma, and more, the documentary explores both the music itself and the impact of his timeless music on those who have been inspired by it. Streaming now on Disney+.

PRODUCTION DIARY

Star Wars movies and television programs coming from a galaxy far, far away....

NOW STREAMING

STAR WARS SKELETON CREW

Starring Jude Law, Ravi Cabot-Conyers, Ryan Kiera Armstrong, Kyriana Kratter, and Robert Timothy Smith
Disney+

STAR WARS THE ACOLYTE

Starring: Amandla Stenberg, Lee Jung-jae, Manny Jacinto, Dafne Keen, Jodie Turner-Smith, Rebecca Henderson, Charlie Barnett, Dean-Charles Chapman, and Carrie-Anne Moss
Disney+

LEGO STAR WARS REBUILD THE GALAXY

Starring Gaten Matarazzo, Tony Revolori, Bobby Moynihan, Marsai Martin, Michael Cusack, Ahmed Best, and Mark Hamill
Disney+

IN DEVELOPMENT

STAR WARS ANDOR

Season Two
Starring Diego Luna as Cassian Andor.
Disney+

STAR WARS THE MANDALORIAN

THE MANDALORIAN AND GROGU
Directed by Jon Favreau

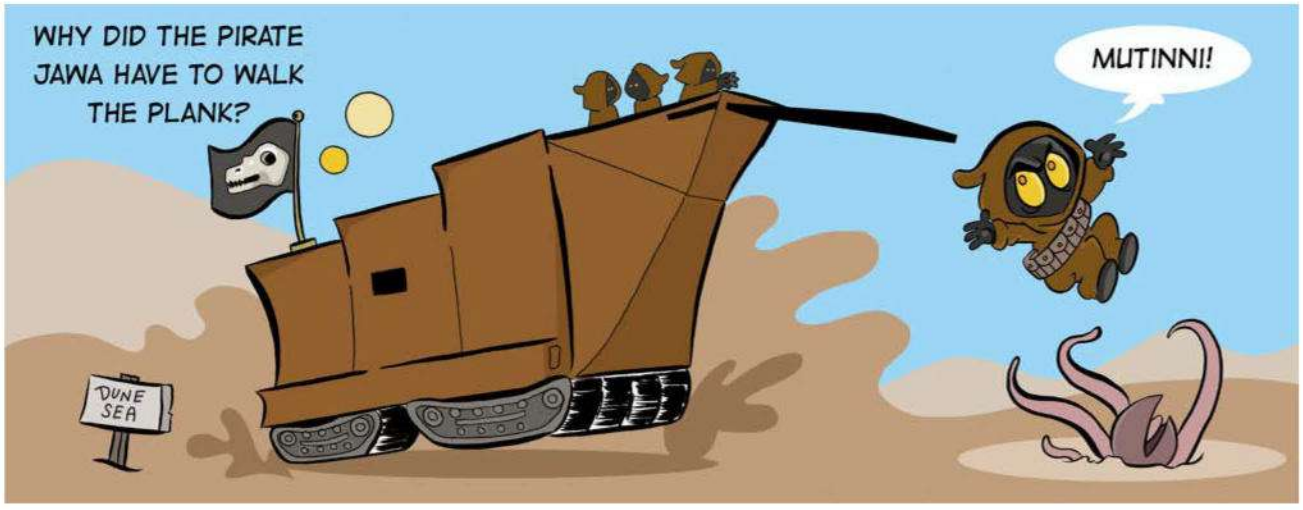
Journey with Jedi Bob

Hit the hyperspace lanes in this custom building set

From Darth Jar Jar to the *Dark Falcon*, the four-piece LEGO® *Star Wars: Rebuild the Galaxy* animated special introduced topsy-turvy takes on iconic characters. The outstanding ensemble also welcomed Jedi Bob, whose origins date back to a mysterious unnamed minifigure from a 2002 *Star Wars: Attack of the Clones* LEGO *Star Wars* set. Quite fittingly, Jedi Bob's latest adventures in *Rebuild the Galaxy* have been enshrined in the new Jedi Bob's Starfighter LEGO set, a 305-piece build measuring more than 10 inches in length. Complete with 2 spring-loaded shooters and retractable landing gear, the starfighter also comes with a Jedi Bob minifigure, as well as an Ackbar Trooper minifigure and a buildable Servo (SR-V0) droid figure. A blue milk carton and banana element top off the set's exciting accessories. Turn the galaxy upside down and check out the new building sets on **LEGO.com**, where Jedi Bob's Starfighter retails for $39.99.

THE LIGHT SIDE

By Jamie Cosley



Bespin Breakout!

Chewbacca and C-3PO on the run

In the middle of repairing a damaged C-3PO, Chewbacca needed to carry the disassembled protocol droid on his back as Leia Organa guided her rebel entourage through a skirmish on Cloud City. The Hot Toys Chewbacca with Disassembled C-3PO Sixth Scale Figure captures the mismatched duo in astonishing detail, as the 14.17-inch tall collectible employs a newly developed Wookiee sculpt styled in wool hair with an articulated jaw, a distressed brown bandolier, a blaster, a bowcaster, and handcuffs. C-3PO's body parts are finished with a chrome application, and come with a net for Chewbacca to haul him around in. Head over to **Sideshow.com**, where you can pick up your own Chewbacca with Disassembled C-3PO Figure for $430.

Forged in Beskar

Add the Armorer's high-end headgear to your Mandalorian collection

As the leader of her Mandalorian covert, the Armorer allied with Din Djarin and Bo-Katan Kryze on a joint venture to retake their homeworld. Hasbro is now bolstering its impressive line of adult roleplay items with its new The Black Series: The Armorer Electronic Helmet, a wearable collectible based on the Armorer's appearances in *The Mandalorian*. The full-scale, adjustable-fit helmet features a premium design and deco that would allow you to fit right in among the Mandalorians gathering around the Great Forge. The Armorer Electronic Helmet retails for $99.99 on **HasbroPulse.com** and is expected to ship in May of 2025.

THE STAR WARS DOT COLUMN

From the desk of StarWars.com Editor-in-Chief Kristin Baver

With the arrival of *Star Wars: Skeleton Crew* on Disney+ and preparations for Celebration Japan underway, we've got a host of exciting features covering both and more. Head on over to the official *Star Wars* website now!

Arise, Neel Nation

Wim, Neel, Fern, and KB have just embarked on the adventure of a lifetime in *Star Wars: Skeleton Crew*, which debuted on Disney+ on December 3. For several months I have counted myself among the founding members of Neel Nation, ready to protect this sweet new blue alien at all costs. Learn more about what inspired the creation of the series and take a closer look at the first two episodes.

Origins of the Force in Japan

Looking ahead, we're just a few months away from *Star Wars* Celebration Japan in April. Before you pack your bags, search your feelings and plan your sightseeing with a handy guide to some of Akira Kurosawa's film locations, the birthplace of the ninja, and other elements that directly inspired the *Star Wars* mythology.

Behind the Bricks

This fall the galaxy got turned on its head with LEGO *Star Wars: Rebuild the Galaxy*. Go behind the scenes with 14 of our favorite Easter eggs from the series, including nods to unused concept art, the genesis of Jedi Bob, and more fun than a Sith ship made from LEGO brick separators.

Finding the Force

Reach out with your feelings and begin your Jedi training

As Luke Skywalker sought to learn the ways of the Force in the wake of his departure from Tatooine, Obi-Wan Kenobi tested the farmboy's aptitude by pitting his lightsaber skills against a training remote.

The Disney Store's Jedi Training Remote and Hilt recaptures the magic of the memorable scene, pairing a motorized training sphere with a lightsaber hilt with a shortened blade that changes color to register strikes and blocks, accompanied by realistic sound effects from the movies. The remote swivels and projects targets, while the hilt utilizes haptic feedback to provide a convincing feeling of hits and parries. The Jedi Training Remote and Hilt retails for $89.99 on **DisneyStore.com**.

The Empire Strikes 'Pack'

Carry a Jedi master on your next training run.

Surrounded by Dagobah's swamps, Yoda oversaw Luke Skywalker's arduous Jedi training, even going so far as to hitch a ride on his student's back as he trekked through the perilous terrain in *Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back*. The Disney Store's Yoda Plush Backpack offers a fun take on the movie moment, as its detailed plush sculpt recreates Yoda's signature look with Jedi robes and an attached hooded cape. The polyester backpack boasts adjustable shoulder straps, a top carry strap, and a zippered pocket on the back perfect for storing the essentials necessary for any outing. Priced at $69.99, the Yoda Plush Backpack can be found on **DisneyStore.com**.

Fly Casual

Button up to party with some of the galaxy's local legends

From Mos Eisley's Cantina to the Forest Moon of Endor, the *Star Wars* galaxy was filled with eclectic characters. RSVLTS mobilizes two such gregarious groups for its new line of short-sleeve, button-down shirts, made from Kunuflex four-way stretch material.

"The Golden One" depicts the Ewoks of Bright Tree Village carrying their revered deity C-3PO around their territory, while "A Hard Day's Node" spotlights Figrin D'an and the Modal Nodes in a 1960s-era style that eloquently complements their musical sounds. Both of these outstandingly festive Kunuflex short-sleeve shirts can be purchased on **RSVLTS.com** and added to your wardrobe for $70 each.

Comfy Copilots

RSVLTS even offers attire for your four-legged best friend! *Star Wars* "The Chewie" dog bandana, styled after the Wookiee's fur and bandolier, is also made from Kunuflex and priced at $16. Available now in a range of sizes on **RSVLTS.com**.

Jedi Jingle Bells

HOLIDAY SEASON MUST HAVES

Advent Adventures

Countdown to the holidays with brick-built fun

You can honor the history of LEGO® *Star Wars* while simultaneously enjoying the holiday season with the LEGO *Star Wars* Advent Calendar 2024 building set, a 368-piece collection consisting of mini-build versions of classic LEGO *Star Wars* building sets from 1999 to 2024. The advent calendar comes with 24 gifts, including five collectible LEGO minifigures and an added Super Battle Droid LEGO figure, plus 18 LEGO mini-builds that range in scope from the *Millennium Falcon* and Jabba's sail barge to Darth Vader's Castle. Check out **LEGO.com**, where you can grab your LEGO *Star Wars* Advent Calendar 2024 building set for $44.99.

The Ghost of Rebels Past

Celebrate the Spectres with this anniversary ornament

In order to travel the galaxy and fight the Empire, the rebel cell based on Lothal operated the reliable VCX-100 light freighter known as the *Ghost*. To commemorate *Star Wars Rebels*' 10th anniversary, Hallmark is offering fans the chance to add their very own The *Ghost* Ornament with Sound to their holiday collections.

The 4.93-inch-long plastic Hallmark Keepsake Ornament features a hanger attachment, a colorful gift box, and a button that, when pressed, plays the *Star Wars Rebels* theme. Secure your The *Ghost* Ornament With Sound for $37.99 on **Hallmark.com**.

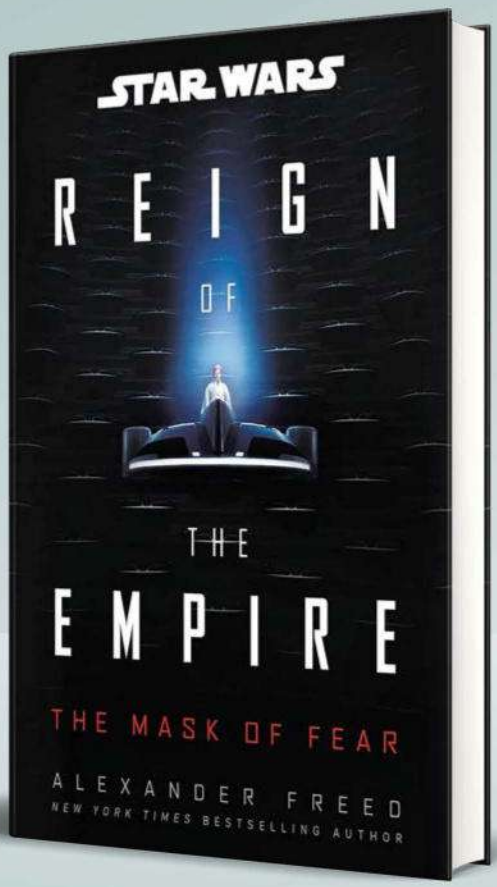
A Decorative Duel

Recreate your own skirmish around the Death Star this holiday season

At the Battle of Yavin, heroic X-wing pilots defended their hidden rebel base against the vaunted Death Star and its armada of TIE fighters. Hallmark dives right into the famous Death Star trench run with its Luke Skywalker's X-wing Starfighter and Darth Vader's TIE Fighter Ornament and Stocking Hanger Sets with Light and Sound. One set features Luke's ship against a Death Star backdrop, while the other depicts Vader's vessel in close pursuit. These dioramas include a fabric loop with a metal hook for hanging stockings, and each plays memorable dialog and sound effects from *Star Wars: A New Hope*. They can also be locked together, providing an additional interactive performance! The Luke Skywalker's X-Wing Starfighter and Darth Vader's TIE Fighter Ornament and Stocking Hanger Sets can be acquired on **Hallmark.com** for $99.99 each.

Book Club

The latest *Star Wars* books provide a terrifying look at the origins of the Galactic Empire



Imperial Foundations

Heroes begin their fight against tyranny in *Reign of the Empire: The Mask of Fear*

Arriving in February 2025, *Reign of the Empire: The Mask of Fear* by veteran *Star Wars* author Alexander Freed (*Battlefront: Twilight Company, Alphabet Squadron*) is the first installment in a new trilogy of novels that will explore the early years of the Galactic Empire, as told from the perspectives of Senator Mon Mothma, her colleague Bail Organa, and the renegade freedom fighter Saw Gerrera.

When Supreme Chancellor Sheev Palpatine announced the establishment of the First Galactic Empire in a speech before the Senate, he promised a safe and secure society and blamed the recent troubles squarely at the feet of the Jedi. Most legislators, relieved at the news that the war had ended, greeted Palpatine's words with thunderous applause. But in the aftermath of the new Emperor's proclamation, Mon Mothma, Saw Gerrera, and Bail Organa recognized the dangers of a coming dictatorship, and searched for ways to oppose the encroaching darkness with actions that ultimately paved the way for the establishment of the Rebel Alliance. Now, each of them must find their way in a changing galaxy, while harboring secret hopes for a future that might never be possible.

As the opening chapter in a three-part epic, *Mask of Fear* sets up a narrative scenario that Freed has described as "a political thriller, spy drama and sweeping historical epic, all at once," following the core characters over the course of two decades, and revealing how their courage and deeds resulted in the Age of Rebellion.

Rise of the Empire: The Mask of Fear from Random House Worlds, featuring a striking cover by artist Marko Manev of Mon Mothma standing alone as a beacon of light in a darkened Imperial Senate chamber, is on sale February 25.

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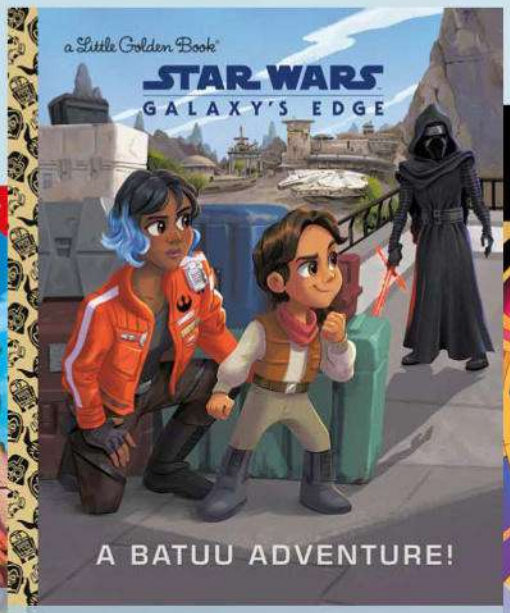
02



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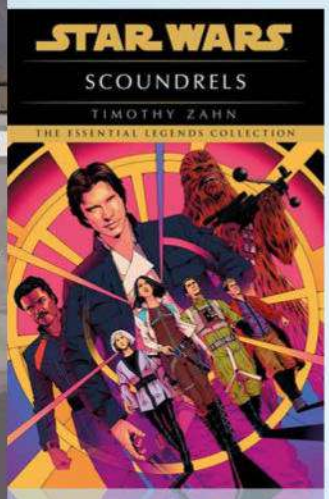


01

Star Wars: Young Jedi Adventures Ultimate Sticker Collection

The Disney+ TV series *Star Wars: Young Jedi Adventures* gets an interactive, adhesive treatment in this lush, 72-page sticker collection coming soon from DK Publishing.

Join Kai Brightstar, Lys Solay, Nubs, and Jedi Master Yoda in this tie-in volume, that comes with more than 1,000 stickers depicting creatures, characters, vehicles, and villains from the award-winning series alongside fascinating nuggets of relevant *Star Wars* trivia from the era of the High Republic. This book is ideal for children just starting their reading journey, as well as parents and caregivers who are eager to give their younglings a leg up in the area of reading comprehension. *Star Wars: Young Jedi Adventures Ultimate Sticker Collection* is on sale February 4.

02

Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge: A Batuu Adventure!

For generations, Little Golden Books have told relatable tales for young readers, which has cemented their golden-spine packaging as an iconic guarantee of quality. In the latest entry in the Golden Books series, young *Star Wars* fans can blast off to the Outer Rim world of Batuu—the location of Black Spire Outpost, the trading hub brought into the real world in the *Star Wars:* Galaxy's Edge attraction at Disneyland in Anaheim, California and Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida.

The tale begins when a curious boy stops with his family for refueling on Batuu and gets swept up in an adventure with the Rebel Alliance. Written by Jeneanne DeBois with illustrations by Bill Robinson, *Galaxy's Edge: A Batuu Adventure* features locations, characters, and creatures from the Disney Parks, in a story that's perfect for kids and fans of all ages. On sale February 25.

03

Star Wars: The Essential Legends Collection

This February, three classic *Star Wars* novels will reappear in bookstores under Random House Worlds' *Essential Legends Collection* banner.

First up is Timothy Zahn's *Scoundrels*, originally published in 2013, which finds Han Solo and Chewbacca mixed up in a heist caper set shortly after the events of *A New Hope*. In Jim Luceno's 2005 *Dark Lord: The Rise of Darth Vader*, the aftermath of *Revenge of the Sith* sets up Vader's rise to power in the Galactic Empire as he struggles to shed his former identity as Anakin Skywalker. Finally, 2010's *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II* by Sean Williams is a novelization of the best-selling videogame sequel from LucasArts. In this adaptation, Starkiller—a supposed clone of Darth Vader's secret apprentice Galen Marek—fights the enemies of the Empire, while wrestling with his identity and affection for former Imperial pilot, Juno Eclipse. In stores February 2025.

Comics Roundup

Renegade clones achieve the impossible in the latest *Star Wars* comics

The Bad Batch Gets It Done!

Clone Force 99 reports for duty in their own five-part limited series adventure

Created for Season 7 of the hit animated series *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, the Bad Batch were a grab-bag of oddball genetic mutations who came into their own during their eponymous animated series on Disney+, which concluded earlier this year.

Now the batch are making a comeback in *Star Wars: Hyperspace Stories: The Bad Batch: Ghost Agents* #1. Set during the peak of the Clone Wars as Republic forces battle the Separatist droid army, this new, five-part limited series sees the Batch headlining their first-ever comic.

Although Republic commanders claim that the Bad Batch have a one-hundred percent success rate in executing their assigned missions, this is one time where the squad may have bitten off more than they can chew! *Ghost Agents* has Clone Force 99 assigned to track down a mysterious Separatist agent who is wanted for executing a brazen heist on the Republic capital world of Coruscant. When Hunter, Wrecker, Crosshair, and Tech follow the thief's trail to the seediest corners of the galaxy, they arrive at a destination populated by kingpins and goons who gleefully threaten the clones' mission—not to mention their lives!

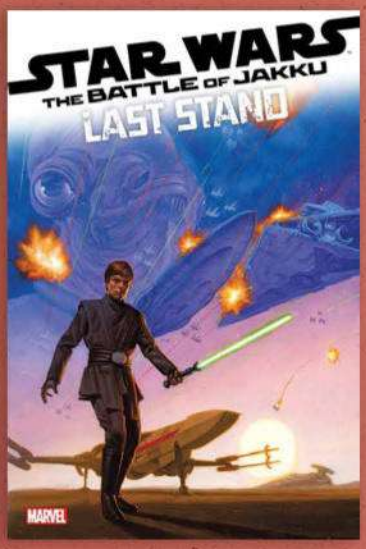
The Bad Batch: Ghost Agents appears under the banner of *Star Wars: Hyperspace Stories*, a Dark Horse Comics series which debuted in 2022 as an all-ages comics anthology. Writer Michael Moreci (*Hyperspace Stories* and *Burning Fields*) pens the five-issue adventure, assisted by penciler Reese Hannigan, inker Elisabetta D'Amico, and colorist Michael Atiyeh, with a cover by Valeria "Lux" Favoccia.

The Bad Batch: Ghost Agents goes on sale January 15, 2025.

The Battle of Jakku: Last Stand #1 (of 4)

The Battle of Jakku continues in *Last Stand*, the opening salvo in a final, four-issue mini-series exploring the final days of the war against the Galactic Empire.

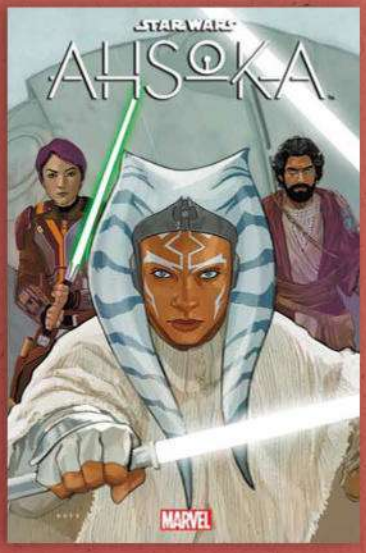
Written by Alex Segura with art by Jethro Moralez and Leonard Kirk, issue #1—on sale December 25, 2024—sees a dark force strike at the heart of the newly formed Republic when Chandrila comes under attack. Issue #2 follows on January 8, 2025, in which a trio of reunited heroes face an ominous new threat—and Jakku is its target! E.M. Gist provides the art for the newsstand covers, with variants by Rod Reis.



Ahsoka #7 (of 8)

Marvel Comics' adaptation of the Disney+ series *Star Wars: Ahsoka* reaches its penultimate issue with "Dreams and Madness," written by Rodney Barnes, with art by Steven Cummings and a cover by Phil Noto. Two variant covers will be available, featuring art by Rod Reis and Taurin Clarke.

While GeneralHera Syndulla must answer for her actions before a gathering of New Republic senators, Ahsoka Tano is en route to Peridea in pursuit of Morgan Elsbeth and, potentially, Grand Admiral Thrawn. Meanwhile, Sabine Wren and Ezra Bridger have their own problems to deal with. On sale January 1, 2025.

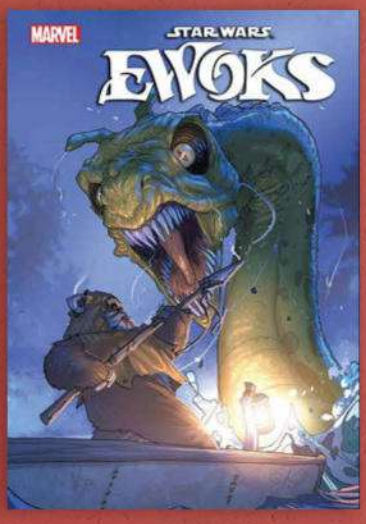


Ewoks #3 (of 4)

Written by Steve Orlando, this epic Ewok adventure continues as the inhabitants of the Forest Moon face up to invasion by the Empire!

Forced to guide a scout party of Imperial troops through the glades of Endor, it seems Wicket's only hope of rescue lies with a party of Ewoks who are determined to get him back, with the help of warrior Meedro and the mysterious Red Ghost. But as both parties head towards a cache of Imperial weapons, are they ready for the horrors that await them?

With art by Laura Brage and Álvaro López, and covers by Pete Woods and John Tyler Christopher, *Ewoks* #3 is on sale December 18, 2024.



Incoming

Don't Miss These Upcoming Releases

DECEMBER

***Darth Vader: Black, White & Red* Trade Paperback**
Marvel Comics
Writers: Jason Aaron, Peach Momoko, and Torunn Grønbekk
Artists: Leonard Kirk, Peach Momoko, and Klaus Janson
Cover Artist: Taurin Clarke

JANUARY

***The Battle of Jakku: Last Stand* #3 & #4**
Marvel Comics
Writer: Alex Segura
Artist: Jethro Morales
Cover Artist: E.M. Gist

***A New Legacy* #1**
Marvel Comics
Writers: Charles Soule, Jason Aaron, and Kieron Gillen
Artists: Ramon Rosanas, Leonard Kirk, and Salva Espin
Cover Artist: Steve McNiven

***Jango Fett: Trail of Lost Hope* Trade Paperback**
Marvel Comics
Writer: Ethan Sacks
Artist: Luke Ross
Cover Artist: Leinil Francis Yu

STAR WARS THE HIGH REPUBLIC

Luminous Lore

Shining a light on *Star Wars: The High Republic.*

Danger from the Deep

The terrifying legacy of Starlight Beacon's destruction!

Exclusive to Audible, *Star Wars: The High Republic: Seeds of Starlight*—an audiobook original written by George Mann—sees a mystery unfold on the oceanic world of Eiram, where Starlight Beacon crashed in the climax of Phase I.

When locals go missing, the Jedi stationed on Eiram send out a transmission for help. However, with their resources stretched by the ongoing battle with the Nihil, the Order can only spare a single Knight and three Jedi-in-training to investigate. The situation encountered by Master Eve Byre and her Padawan Cam, along with younglings Tep Tep and Kildo, is more dire than they could have possibly imagined. A dangerous threat has emerged from the wreckage of Starlight Beacon, deep beneath the ocean, and no one is safe—not even the Jedi.

Can Eve and her young companions succeed in pulling off a daring rescue and save the town while battling terrifying creatures? And what evil will they discover beneath the turbulent waves? Find out in *Seeds of Starlight*, available now.

A Break in the Storm

Sparks fly when the Jedi and the Nihil join forces!

There's more action from *The High Republic* era in *Tempest Breaker*, an audiobook original by Cavan Scott, released by Random House Audio on December 3, 2024.

Featuring a full cast in the style of classic radio dramas, the tale portends the return of Lourna Dee of the Nihil, and is a sequel to Scott's previous *Star Wars* audio drama, *Tempest Runner*. Announcing the new project on StarWars.com, the writer promised that "Sparks will fly," when Dee teams up with Keeve Trennis following the souring of her relationship with Nihil leader Marchion Ro.

"Lourna finally faces the consequences of her past crimes," said Scott. "And not just crimes against the Jedi. Those who enjoyed our first Lourna Dee audio drama, *Tempest Runner*, will hear some familiar voices on the way as she comes up against old friends, foes, and lovers. Where does Marchion Ro fit into that mix? Well, you'll have to listen to find out."

The complete script will also be published in print and as an eBook edition in Spring 2025.

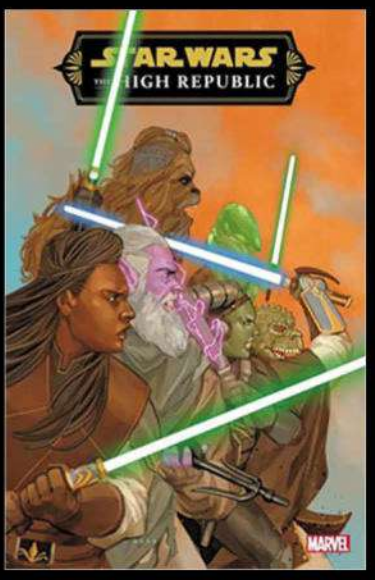
INCOMING COMICS

The High Republic comic-book releases arriving this December and January!

***The High Republic Adventures: The Wedding Spectacular* #1**
Dark Horse Comics
Writer: Daniel José Older
Artist: Harvey Tolibao
Cover Artist: Cherriielle
On sale: December 18, 2024

***The High Republic Adventures:* Phase III Volume II TPB**
Dark Horse Comics
Writer: Daniel José Older
Artists: Harvey Tolibao, Toni Bruno
Cover Artists: Harvey Tolibao & Kevin Tolibao
On sale: January 21, 2025

***The High Republic Adventures* Phase III 2025 Annual**
Dark Horse Comics
Writers: Various
Artists: Various
Cover Artist: Eduardo Francisco
On sale: January 22, 2025



***The High Republic: Fear of the Jedi* #1**
Marvel Comics
Writer: Cavan Scott
Artist: Marika Cresta
Cover Artist: Phil Noto
On sale: February 2, 2025

Republic Roundup

(Excluding Comics & Manga)

PHASE I

Light of the Jedi
Writer: Charles Soule
Random House Worlds, Adult novel

A Test of Courage
Writer: Justina Ireland
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

The Great Jedi Rescue
Writer: Cavan Scott
Artist: Petur Antonsson
Disney Lucasfilm Press, 8x8 storybook

Into the Dark
Writer: Claudia Gray
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

The Rising Storm
Writer: Cavan Scott
Random House Worlds, Adult novel

Race to Crashpoint Tower
Writer: Daniel José Older
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

Out of the Shadows
Writer: Justina Ireland
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

Tempest Runner
Writer: Cavan Scott
Random House Worlds, Audio original novel

Showdown at the Fair
Writer: George Mann
Artist: Petur Antonsson
Disney Lucasfilm Press, 8x8 storybook

The Fallen Star
Writer: Claudia Gray
Random House Worlds, Adult novel

Mission to Disaster
Writer: Justina Ireland
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

Midnight Horizon
Writer: Daniel José Older
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

The Battle for Starlight
Writer: George Mann
Artist: Petur Antonsson
Disney Lucasfilm Press, 8x8 storybook

Jedi Brave in Every Way
Writers: Rosemary Soule and Charles Soule
Artist: Valerie Valdivia
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Picture Book

PHASE II

Path of Deceit
Writers: Justina Ireland and Tessa Gratton
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

Quest for the Hidden City
Writer: George Mann
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

Convergence
Writer: Zoraida Córdova
Random House Worlds, Adult novel

The Battle of Jedha
Writer: George Mann
Random House Worlds, Audio original novel

Cataclysm
Writer: Lydia Kang
Random House Worlds, Adult novel

Quest for Planet X
Writer: Tessa Gratton
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

Path of Vengeance
Writer: Cavan Scott
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

PHASE III

Tales of Light and Life
Writers: Various
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult anthology

The Eye of Darkness
Writer: George Mann
Random House Worlds, Adult novel

Escape from Valo
Writers: Daniel José Older and Alyssa Wong
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

Defy the Storm
Writers: Tessa Gratton and Justina Ireland
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

Temptation of the Force
Writer: Tessa Gratton
Random House Worlds, Adult novel

Beware the Nameless
Writer: Zoraida Córdova
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Middle Grade novel

Tears of the Nameless
Writer: George Mann
Disney Lucasfilm Press, Young Adult novel

DENIS LAWSON
RED TWO, STANDING BY

The actor who played Wedge Antilles takes *Insider* back to 1976 and his ongoing connection with the *Star Wars* galaxy.

WORDS: JOHN KIRK

Perhaps it was the intensity of his role as Luke Skywalker's wingman in the dramatic Death Star trench run in *Star Wars: A New Hope*, but Denis Lawson's turn as rebel pilot Wedge Antilles was an instant hit, assuring him return visits in both original trilogy sequels and a triumphant cameo in *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*. *Insider* sat down with the respected stage and screen actor to find out how this relatively small role became such a big part of *Star Wars*.

***Star Wars Insider:* Almost 50 years after first playing Wedge Antilles, you reprised the role in *The Rise of Skywalker*. How did that come about?**

Denis Lawson: Well, the whole thing was really touch and go. I received an email directly from J.J. Abrams, and that's not how these things usually happen, so I thought maybe it was a prank. I got in touch with my agent and asked if the message was from the *actual* J.J. Abrams, and he said, "Yes!"

J.J. really wanted me to appear as Wedge again, but at the time I was in a stage play, and then directly after that was moving on to direct another play. He wanted me on set for five days, but I couldn't fit that into my schedule. The reason why it's such a brief appearance is that I could only manage one day out of those five, which was a shame. But I can honestly say it was so nice to be back on a *Star Wars* set, sitting in a different type of cockpit. And J.J. created a great atmosphere for us. I was very impressed by him.

How did you originally land the role in *A New Hope*?

It was very random. A lot of actors I knew had heard about this director who was in London, wanting to meet young actors to play pilots in this "thing." So, I met this guy, George Lucas, briefly, but I didn't hear anything back. I just guessed he'd met more actors than he needed! I was very busy that year and had been in France doing a couple of movies, but as soon as I got back to London, I suddenly got the call to do his movie. I'll tell you how random it was, and I never got to the bottom of it, but I found they'd cast someone else as Wedge. For some reason, he didn't work out, so they brought me in instead. ▶

> "NOBODY HAD ANY SENSE OF WHAT AN ADVENTURE IT WAS GOING TO BE."

01 Denis Lawson as rebel pilot Wedge Antilles.

02

Maybe it was your destiny?
It probably was (*laughs*)! It certainly seemed random at the time, but it was clearly meant to be.

Did you have any idea of how big *Star Wars* would become?
Oh God, no. Back in 1976? Not at all! People often ask me what my favorite film out of the first three in the series is, and I always say it's the first one, and that's because we had no idea what we were in! We hadn't even seen a full script at that time. Nobody had any sense of what an adventure it was going to be. But how exciting it was!

So, you were flying by the seat of your pants on set, as it were?
Yes! (*laughs*)! I knew a lot of the other guys, as we'd all been in the business together for some time, and we would hang around outside the sound stage together, chatting away and fooling around. Then we were called in, one at a time, for the battle sequences. We'd climb up this wooden ladder onto a sort of raft on stilts, which is the only way I can describe it, and sit in the cockpit—we didn't even know it was called an X-wing at that time—and the camera was right there in front of your face, with George sitting beside it.

There were twenty-five pages of dialogue in those battle sequences, and George thought we could just do our lines, one after another, without any cues. I had to say to him, "George, I can't do that. We don't work that way. I'll tell you what we should do: You say my line to me, and I'll say it back to you." So, we did it that way, and after I'd done each line, he'd say, "Now look over there and say it again." We did so many takes on the line, "Look at the size of that thing," that I can honestly say I really did get a good idea of how big *that thing* was (*laughs*)!

And you became one of the most recognized background characters in *Star Wars*. How does that make you feel?
I guess it still surprises me, because all I did was turn up and do the best job I could. It's over the years that this mythology has developed around Wedge—around all the characters, let's face it—but me? Really? All I did was sit in a chair! But it still does surprise me to this day, especially when a fan comes up to me and says, "Thank you for

02 Wedge Antilles squared up against the Death Star in *A New Hope*.

03 In *The Empire Strikes Back*, Wedge took the controls of a snowspeeder.

03

"WE DID SO MANY TAKES ON THE LINE, 'LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT THING,' THAT I CAN HONESTLY SAY I REALLY DID GET A GOOD IDEA OF HOW BIG THAT THING WAS!"

my childhood." It's extraordinary. I've had grown men weeping, telling me that I gave them so much happiness, which is such a wonderful thing to be told, but all I did was just turn up.

What led you into acting?

I come from a large Scottish family, and it was a very Scottish thing to do at parties to get up and perform something at the front of the room. Everyone did it. No one was ever too shy, and even if you were, you couldn't take a pass. My grandfather would do old music-hall songs, and all my uncles could sing or play the spoons, and the performing bug never left me. So, it came out of that, and from the movies. The *movies*! I wanted to be like Donald O'Connor, Fred Astaire, and Gene Kelly, so I was inspired by American Vaudeville and British Music Hall tradition. It was as simple as that: I wanted to be a performer.

04 Denis Lawson as Wedge Antilles.

05 Wedge and Nien Nunb during the rebel briefing in *Return of the Jedi*.

You studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, as did another *Star Wars* luminary.

Everyone knows about my wonderful nephew, Ewan McGregor, but not a lot of people know about my connection with Ian McDiarmid. When I first tried to get into drama school, I had no guidance in how to do it. I went to visit a friend who was kicking off his career in journalism in Dundee, Scotland, and by chance discovered this amateur dramatic company in a small theatre while I was there. I thought, *Why don't I join them to learn more?* So, that's what I did. They took me in, and I did about six or seven plays over ten months. Their leading actor was Ian McDiarmid, who later played Emperor Palpatine.

I met him when I was seventeen years old, and we both auditioned for the Royal Scottish Academy in ▶

05

04

WEDGE ANTILLES' GREATEST HITS!

"WATCH YOUR BACK, LUKE!"

During the rebel assault on the Death Star in *A New Hope*, Wedge flew to the rescue to blast an Imperial TIE fighter that was about to take out Luke Skywalker's X-wing.

"WHOOAH!! THAT GOT HIM!"

Piloting a snowspeeder on Hoth in *The Empire Strikes Back*, Wedge and his gunner Wes Janson toppled a mighty AT-AT walker using a harpoon and cable, giving the rebels more time to evacuate.

"I'M ALREADY ON MY WAY OUT."

Having negotiated the deadly innards of the second Death Star, Wedge fired the first shots at the superweapon's power core that would lead to its destruction.

"NICE FLYING, LANDO!"

Manning one of the *Millennium Falcon*'s gun turrets during the Battle of Exegol, Wedge lent his sure-shot aim to aid the Resistance in destroying the Sith Eternal fleet.

Glasgow the following year, on the same day. We walked out into the street together after the audition, had a chat, shook hands, and I watched him walk away up the street. I thought, "I'll never see that guy again!" But we both got in and trained together for the next three years. He's an amazing stage actor.

You mentioned your nephew, Ewan McGregor. He once remarked that it "blew my tiny mind" when he saw his Uncle Denis in *Star Wars*. Is it a treasured shared experience?

It's an extraordinary thing and such a lovely connection. Ewan used to love listening to the stories I would tell him about acting when he was young, but I'd always say to him, "Don't do it! Don't do it!" (*laughs.*) Then, when *The Phantom Menace* came up and he was offered the Obi-Wan Kenobi part, all I could say to him was, "Are you sure about this, mate? Be careful." I was worried he might get type-cast, you know, where an actor gets associated with a particular type of character. But I'm delighted to say that he ignored me! He's such a brilliantly versatile actor, and it has only sped him on.

06

Have you ever talked *Star Wars* with each other?

Ha! No, not really. We've never talked about our characters, but we do sometimes joke around about our experiences of doing it. I remember a lovely time we did a convention panel together in Sydney, Australia, myself, Ewan, and George Lucas. George is a very modest man, very shy, quiet-spoken, always wearing a plaid shirt. If you walked on to a set and he was directing, you wouldn't know who he was. So, we were on the stage together, and I looked over at George and I said: "George, for God's sake, you're wearing the same shirt you were wearing in 1976!" It was a lovely moment to have shared with both both of them.

I like doing panels at conventions. I find it very moving to get the reception I get when I walk on stage and tell these stories. There's one I tell when I talk to fans that never fails to disappoint. You remember the sequence in *Return of the Jedi* when I dance with the Ewoks? I'd forgotten to take off my helmet and

06 Dancing with Ewoks was Lawson's "big moment" according to Harrison Ford (Han Solo).

07 Denis Lawson returned as Wedge for a cameo in *The Rise of Skywalker*.

07

08

1940 Broadway production was Gene Kelly. I learned that Gene happened to be at Elstree Studios, where we shot the original movie and *The Empire Strikes Back*, as a guest star on *The Muppet Show*. Through Mark Hamill I'd become friends with the muppeteers, and I was invited along to the recording. During a break, one of the cast members came over to me and said, "Look, no one is supposed to bother Mr. Kelly in his dressing room, but it's you, so come with me." He took me to visit Gene, and I told this hero of mine that I was playing Joey, and he was so warm, welcoming, and charming. That's a moment that stands out for me. I guess I can relate to that when people come up to me to talk about Wedge.

was dancing with these adorable creatures when Harrison Ford came over to me, leaned in, and murmured, "This is your big moment, Denis!" (*laughs*). Harrison has a wickedly dry sense of humor and irony; he's a very funny, charming man. I admire him greatly as an actor.

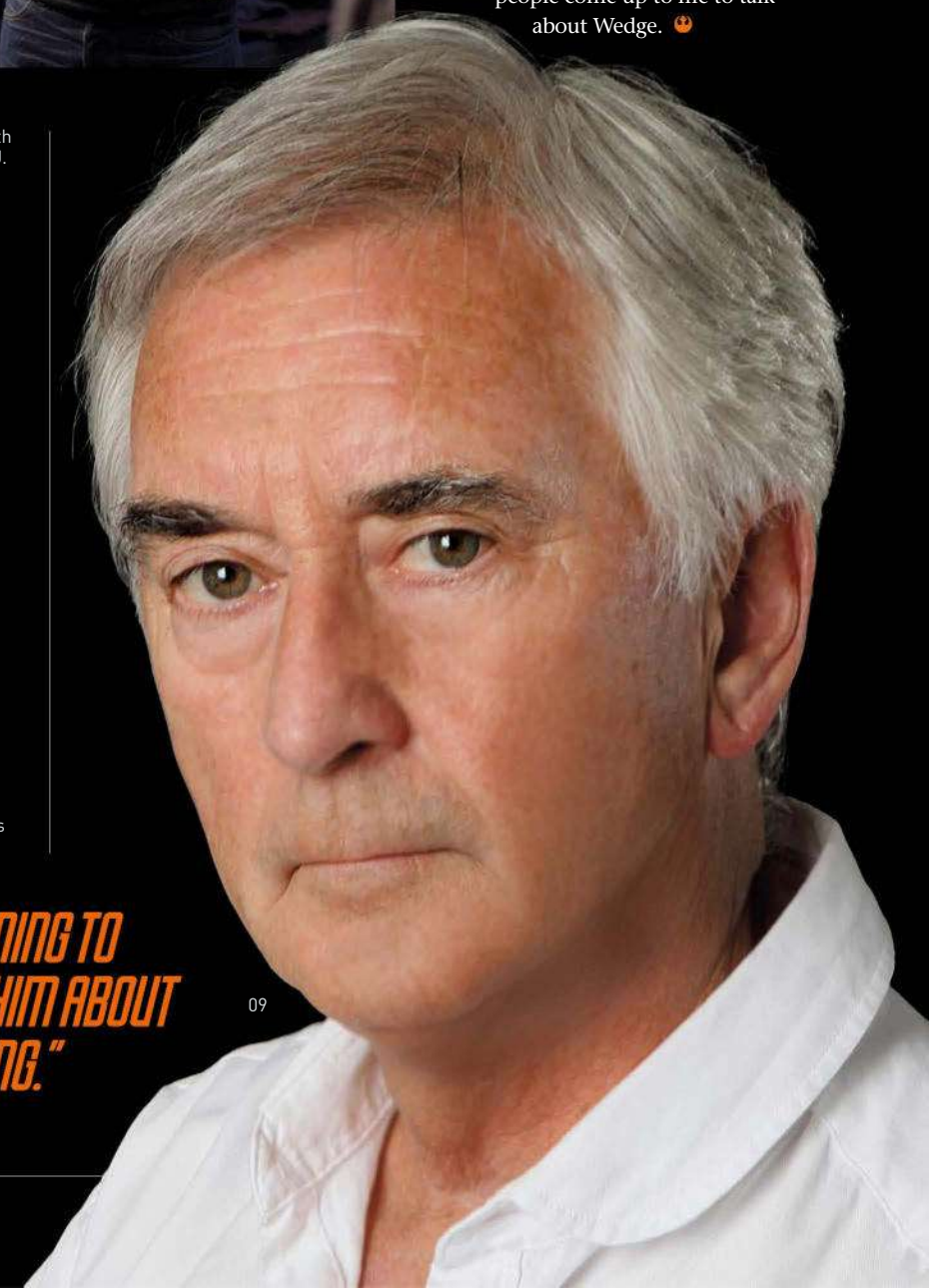
08 Lawson with director J.J. Abrams.

Has the legacy of playing Wedge in the original *Star Wars* movie had any impact on your wider career?

In terms of my working life, and where my career was moving at that point, I don't think it had much of an effect. But I did get to meet one of my heroes because of *Star Wars*.

In 1980 I was playing the lead in a musical called *My Pal Joey* (Lawson was nominated for an Olivier Award that year. Ed.), and the actor who played the same character in the original

09 Actor Denis Lawson.



09

"EWAN USED TO LOVE LISTENING TO THE STORIES I WOULD TELL HIM ABOUT ACTING WHEN HE WAS YOUNG."

JOIN THE CREW

Star Wars: Skeleton Crew **showrunners Jon Watts and Christopher Ford introduce *Star Wars Insider* to a story of adventure, danger, and friendship.**

WORDS: AMY RATCLIFFE

Jon Watts remembers the day he first pitched the idea for *Star Wars: Skeleton Crew*. Having wrapped press in Japan for *Spider-Man: Homecoming* (2017), he flew home to the United States and went straight from the airport to meet Kathleen Kennedy to present an idea he and Christopher Ford had been playing around with. A tale about a group of kids in a galaxy far, far away, seeking adventure and, for better or worse, getting what they wished for.

Watts and Ford recently spoke with *Star Wars Insider* about *Skeleton Crew*'s tone, the case, and nerding out over working with John Knoll, Doug Chiang, and Phil Tippett.

Star Wars Insider: **We have these four kids going on this grand adventure. How did you balance the story of their friendship with a bigger world. What was it like walking that line?**

Jon Watts: It is a really grounding perspective to have four 10 and 11-year-old kids as your entry point into the *Star Wars* galaxy, because you just try to put yourself in their shoes. They don't know how big the galaxy is. They don't know anything other than what they're all experiencing for the first time. It made us go back and start thinking about the first time *we* experienced certain things in *Star Wars* for the first time; we went back to that moment to try and translate that into the story of these four kids.

Christopher Ford: What do they think an X-wing is? What would they call it if no one had told them what it was?"

JW: We had to keep reminding ourselves, "They haven't seen the movies!" These kids only have a small amount of the information to go on.

The characters might not need to know that, but obviously your story is set in the same timeline as *The Mandalorian*, with at least one character crossing over in Vane, a Nikto pirate. How did you work with Dave Filoni and Jon Favreau?

JW: Having Dave Filoni and Jon Favreau there felt like a giant safety net. It allowed us to take ideas and run with them, and they would let us know when we might be going a little bit too far beyond this boundary or that direction. It was good having their support and knowing they had already explored so many parts of this galaxy, even in things that they hadn't personally made.

01 Four kids set out on an amazing adventure in *Skeleton Crew*.

02 (Left to right), KB (Kyriana Kratter), Neel (Robert Timothy Smith), Fern (Ryan Kiera Armstrong), and Wim (Ravi Cabot-Conyers).

Pirates can mean danger, so what sort of tone did you want to set with your story?

JW: A great definition of what makes an Amblin movie feel like Amblin is that they're grown-up films that just happen to star kids. So, we never tried to make *Skeleton Crew* feel like a kid's show. It always had real stakes. There's real danger. There's a chance that they could get fried or blasted multiple times, even eaten, and we always tried to play that realistically and not undercut the drama. And it's in that balance of a 10-year-old's awe and wonder at this new world, with those high-level stakes. Those two things combined create the tone.

Let's talk about Wim, Fern, KB, and Neel. What were you looking for when you cast the kids?

JW: I had an amazing meeting with Richard Donner a couple weeks before he passed away, and we were talking about *The Goonies* (1985). He said that when "you're casting kids, you're not casting kids to play a role, you're looking for someone who embodies the spirit of the character." He told me a story about a *Goonies* reunion

"WE NEVER TRIED TO MAKE IT FEEL LIKE A KID'S SHOW. IT ALWAYS HAD REAL STAKES." JON WATTS

02

03

JOD

Played by Jude Law
Jod is an enigmatic stranger who befriends the lost kids. His motives are mysterious and trusting him may or may not be a mistake.

04

many years later, and he said, "They were all exactly what they were like when they were 10." They paired off into the same groups. They were making the same kinds of jokes, telling the same kinds of stories. So, we weren't necessarily casting the roles that we had in our heads, but looking for these four amazing kids that we found, around whom we could tweak the dialogue and dynamics to match, as opposed to the other way around.

CF: We wanted them to have that kid interaction where they might do things you couldn't write.

Who, would you say, is the leader of the group?

CF: That's a point of contention. They're not necessarily four friends from the very beginning; they're forming that friend group as the series progresses.
There's Wim, who just wants to go on an adventure, but once he does, he thinks, "Maybe this is too much. Maybe I *don't* want this!"

JW: It's like wishing for adventure, and then you get it and it's scary, and you think maybe you would rather go home. We liked taking some of those tropes and trying to flip them, so you're never quite sure who's who. All the kids think they're the leader and the hero of their own story. To put all four of them together and watch that dynamic shift, that was one of the nice things about having eight episodes—you get to see those changes happen over time. So, the kids aren't just archetypes. We have the time to explore their growth and change over the course of the adventure.

03 Blasting into hyperspace aboard the *Onyx Cinder*.

04 The kids adventure is a far cry from school life.

05 Can the kids trust Jod (Jude Law) with their safety?

Along their journey, the kids meet Jod—who may or may not be a Jedi. How does the character fit into the story?

JW: It's so hard to talk about him without any spoilers.

05

WIM

Played by Ravi Cabot-Conyers
An imaginative boy growing up in the suburbs, Wim daydreams of adventure and loses himself in storypads full of tales of old.

06

NEEL

Played by Robert Timothy Smith
A loyal best friend, a studious pupil, and an awkward good-natured kid, Neel is never far from Wim's side. The two look after each other as an unexpected event takes them far from the safety of their home and family.

06 Neel and Wim with their hoverbikes.

07 The retro-styled poster promoting the launch of Skeleton Crew on Disney+.

07

He's a person.

CF: He *is* a person!

JW: We can talk about how great Jude Law is in the role.

He is fantastic.

JW: Jude was so incredible. Not only is he the greatest actor, but he's also such a wonderful guy. He was great with the kids. He really helped guide them and keep them focused. He's also a huge *Star Wars* fan.

As you went through the process of making the series, do any moments stand out to you as being particularly surreal?

JW: You know, Jude was starstruck by seeing Jawas—seeing them live, seeing them real. He couldn't believe it. And for me, I love stop-motion, so getting to go to Phil Tippett's studio and see it happening was incredible.

CF: Seeing the model of the ship was a big moment, too.

JW: Yes! We went to Industrial Light & Magic and saw John Knoll working. We built a real ship and

08 Space pirates, including the Nikto Vane (Marti Matulis, second from left).

09 The crew discover a battered droid (voiced by Nick Frost).

10 Jod Na Nawood (Law) with the Skeleton Crew.

FERN

Played by Ryan Kiera Armstrong
Fern is best friends with KB, her partner in hoverbike racing. Fern's attitude and appetite for risks conceal her academic excellence.

did actual motion-control photography of it, just like they did on the original movies. Being at ILM and looking at a *Star Wars* spaceship was…!

CF: John would be sitting, watching the monitor. We'd go over and be like, "Hello, John Knoll. I'm going to also sit here."

JW: John Knoll, Doug Chiang. I was pretty starstruck all the time—to the point where I had to remind myself that we were all working together to make something. But with Doug and with that design team, everything they designed is so good. It's this extremely luxurious experience as a showrunner and as a director, to be just given five options that are all so cool for locations, and droids, and wardrobe. It was as fun as you would imagine it to be.

KB

Played by Kyriana Kratter
KB is a resourceful and intelligent girl whose abilities are further augmented by cybernetic implants. Her "augs" give her an edge in accessing computers, repairing technology and performing complex calculations.

You both worked on three *Spider-Man* films for Marvel that are very much about friendship and adventure. What kind of lessons did you bring from those stories and apply to making *Skeleton Crew*?

JW: At the end of the day, it's always a character story. No matter how big the universe gets or how crazy the spectacle becomes, you have to remind yourself that it's always people—and space creatures now, in this case—and it's their story. That's the heart of it. So, no matter how big it gets, we just always try to stay grounded and focused on the characters.

What are you excited for audiences to see in *Skeleton Crew*?

JW: I like the idea that it's an opportunity for people to see a *Star Wars* adventure from a fresh perspective, through the eyes of a 10-year-old kid, because I think many of us craved that same feeling of escape and empowerment when we were younger. We hope everyone enjoys it as much as we all do!

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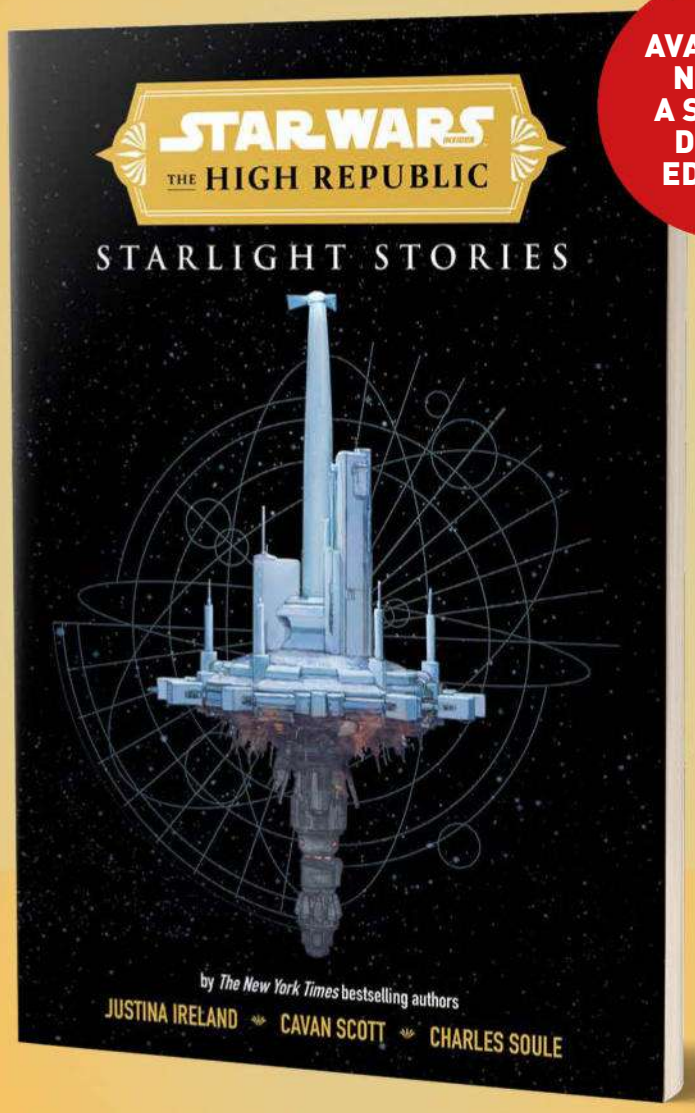

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COMPANION

Creator Leslye Headland's mystery thriller brought the era of the High Republic to live-action with a lightsaber-slashing adventure set more than 100 years before the fall of the Jedi in *Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith*. From the first Jedi murder to the final shocking twist, *Insider* peels back the layers of the Force-infused drama.

WRITER: KRISTIN BAVER • SYNOPSIS: JAY STOBIE

For generations, the Jedi were guardians of peace and justice in the galaxy. But in the hands of series creator Leslye Headland, *Star Wars: The Acolyte* presented these often-stoic heroes as something closer to human—even if one of them was a relatably flawed Wookiee who fell prey to the enchantments of a coven of witches.

The eight-episode journey centered on the story of two sisters, and the mysterious events that led to the death of their family and set them on divergent paths. For Headland, it was a meditation on duality in its many forms, including the internal struggle of individual Jedi trying to balance their own emotions. "My goal was to see Jedi as human beings, or as aliens with the emotions we ascribe to humans," Headland says. "I wanted to make them a little bit more fallible. I don't see the Jedi as antagonists. I see them as flawed, and it was a story that I felt really excited to tell."

Star Amandla Stenberg portrayed both Osha Aniseya, a former Padawan who left the Order, and her sister Mae, an assassin with a kill list of Jedi and a masked master she had never seen face to face. "They're twins that are energetically very different from each other," Stenberg explains. "They've had very different life experiences that have taken them on different journeys, and now they are two young women who are ideologically the most opposite that you could imagine. Yet they're still connected. They're still sisters. And so the question is: What will win in this scenario? Will it be their ideological difference, or will it be the love that they have for each other?"

Over the course of the show, the sisters were forced to face the truth of their past trauma, their connection to the Force, and their bond with each other. Before the credits rolled, one twin would become an Acolyte to the Stranger, played by Manny Jacinto. "I chose the title for a couple of different reasons," Headland adds. "The first was that it felt provocative. It felt like a word you don't hear often, and if you know that the show is about the Sith, I think it excites you to see that title. The idea was two overlapping young women, twins whose beliefs don't always align, headed on a course toward each other that could go one way or another."

EPISODE 1: "LOST / FOUND"

Written and directed by Leslye Headland
Premiered: June 4, 2024

A masked assassin pursues Master Indara to a cantina on Ueda and urges the Jedi to attack her. Though Indara declines, she eventually recognizes her Force-using opponent after defending patrons from the assailant's violent acts. The assassin distracts the Jedi long enough to kill her with a blade.

Bearing a striking resemblance to the slayer, a woman named Osha conducts repairs on a Trade Federation ship. While Jedi Knight Yord Fandar knew Osha prior to her decision to leave the Jedi Order, he nevertheless boards the vessel and arrests her for Indara's murder.

At the Jedi Temple on Coruscant, Master Vernestra Rwoh informs Master Sol that evidence implicates Osha Aniseya, his former Padawan, in the crime. Sol and Indara had rescued Osha from a fire on Brendok when she was a girl. Meanwhile, a revolt on Osha's prison transport leaves her stranded on the snowy world of Carlac, where a vision of her deceased sister, Mae, confesses to killing Indara.

Sol ventures to Carlac and tracks Osha to an icy cave, telling her that he believes she is innocent. On another planet, the assassin meets with a mysterious, red lightsaber-bearing figure who expresses a desire to kill the Jedi's dream.

INSIDER INTEL

TWIN SISTERS

A guarded secret until the two-episode premiere on June 4, 2024, Amandla Stenberg inhabited two roles in the series: twin sisters Mae and Osha Aniseya.

"One of the things I thought about was how did I want to differentiate them?" Stenberg says. "The first thing that I focused on was their walk. I also thought a lot about Yin and Yang, and how Yin is masculine and bright—that's Osha in my mind. And Yang is feminine, dark and mysterious—that's Mae.

"When it came to dropping into each character, I did a lot of backstory work and I made bibles. I always have bibles with me on set because things move so fast and you're always shooting out of order, so I have this packet of information to refer back to. I also had two different perfumes that I would smell because scent is really connected to memory. That was kind of a shortcut to remind me where I was."

EPISODE 2: "REVENGE / JUSTICE"

Written by Jason Micallef & Charmaine DeGraté
Directed by Leslye Headland
Premiered: June 4, 2024

Intent on murdering Master Torbin, Mae infiltrates a local Jedi temple on Olega but fails to break through the Jedi monk's defenses. As Master Vernestra contacts Sol with the news, Sol shares his belief that Osha's twin sister, Mae, is the true perpetrator. With Sol en route to Olega, Mae rendezvouses with her cohort Qimir to obtain poison.

Accompanied by Yord Fandar, Padawan Jecki Lon, and Osha, Sol begins his investigation into Mae's attempt on Torbin. At the same time, Mae sneaks into the local temple once more, offering Torbin the poison as a way to find forgiveness. Torbin apologizes and willingly consumes the deadly liquid.

Hoping to find a lead on Mae, Osha poses as her sister and coaxes a confession out of Qimir. The Jedi set a trap for Mae, and Sol confronts the young woman to ask who had trained her. Shocked to learn that Osha is alive, Mae eludes the Jedi and has a brief run-in with her sister before setting off for the forest retreat of Khofar with Qimir.

Living a life of solitude on Khofar, the Wookiee Jedi Master Kelnacca scares off scavengers who encroach on his makeshift home.

EPISODE 3: "DESTINY"

Written by Jasmine Flournoy & Eileen Shim
Directed by Kogonada
Premiered: June 11, 2024

Sixteen years before Mae began murdering Jedi, she lives on Brendok with Osha, Mother Aniseya, Mother Koril, and their coven of witches. While Mae dreams of participating in her Ascension ceremony, her sister exhibits reluctance. Sequestered in their fortress, Aniseya and Koril teach their daughters about the Thread that connects all living things.

As Mae and Osha quarrel, Mother Aniseya emphasizes the power of many and warns Osha that the galaxy will not welcome someone with her special abilities. Osha nevertheless maintains hope for a life beyond Brendok.

Mother Aniseya leads the Ascension, but the Jedi arrive before she can complete Osha's ritual. Concerned that the coven is training children, Master Indara wishes for Mae and Osha to undergo Jedi testing. Mae purposely fails her test the next day, but Osha reveals her genuine interest in becoming a Jedi.

Mother Aniseya respects Osha's choice, but Mae is angered and traps her sister in a room, intent on setting it ablaze. Sol saves Osha, but they both witness Mae fall into the fiery depths. Believing her entire family had perished, Osha awakes on a Jedi starship and tearfully embraces Sol. Meanwhile, Mae has survived and now stands alone on Brendok.

EPISODE 4: "DAY"

Written by Claire Kiechel & Kor Adana
Directed by Alex Garcia Lopez
Premiered: June 18, 2024

With Kelnacca sequestered in its dangerous forests, Mae lands on Khofar to carry out her mission. Worried about the mysterious individual who trained Mae, Sol confers with Vernestra Rwoh and other masters on Coruscant. Choosing not to contact the High Council so as to ensure that the Senate will not be informed, they dispatch their own team to intercept Mae.

After Sol convinces Osha to accompany him on his assignment to take Mae into custody, the Jedi task force disembarks from their ship and ventures out to locate Kelnacca. The group overcome an encounter with local wildlife, and Osha states that her inability to accept her family's death prevented her from ever becoming a true Jedi.

Though Mae expresses doubt over continuing to pursue revenge against the Jedi, Qimir encourages her to keep going. However, she comes to the conclusion that her loyalty to Osha overrides her agreement with her master. Intent on turning herself in, she treks to Kelnacca's home only to discover that her master has already killed the Wookiee.

The Jedi surround the dwelling and call for Mae to come out, but a dark figure concealed under a helmet and cloak descends upon them and ignites a red-bladed lightsaber…

EPISODE 5: "NIGHT"

Written by Kor Adana & Cameron Squires
Directed by Alex Garcia Lopez
Premiered: June 25, 2024

Osha awakens in Khofar's darkened forests, tripping over the body of a dead Jedi before spotting Mae's master dueling with several others. The masked figure defeats his opponents and begins pursuing Osha through the wilderness. Sol intervenes and orders Yord Fandar to escort Osha to safety, choosing to confront the stranger alone.

As Sol and the Stranger clash, Jecki Lon battles Mae in an attempt to arrest her for her crimes. Mae's master retreats from Sol to locate Mae, engaging Jecki in a fierce lightsaber fight. Mae tries to flee while the Stranger is preoccupied with Sol and Jecki, but Yord and Osha elect to return and assist their friends.

Jecki unmasks her foe, revealing that Qimir has been the Stranger all along. Qimir kills Jecki and holds Mae hostage, claiming that he desires the freedom to wield his power without oversight from the Jedi. Osha uses a light on her repair droid, PIP, to lure umbramoths into attacking the Stranger, while Mae takes the opportunity to stun Sol.

Osha blames Mae for the deaths, but Mae thinks the Jedi have brainwashed her sister. Mae knocks Osha unconscious and steals her civilian clothing, taking her place at Sol's side. The Stranger retrieves his helmet and finds Osha…

EPISODE 6: "TEACH / CORRUPT"

Written by Leslye Headland & Jocelyn Bioh
Directed by Hanelle M. Culpepper
Premiered: July 2, 2024

As Osha regains consciousness on an unknown island, Master Sol transmits a report to inform Coruscant that his entire team was killed. Bazil suspects not all is as it seems with Mae, who continues to disguise herself as Osha. Sol apologizes to the woman he believes to be Osha, but his ship suddenly loses power.

On Coruscant, Vernestra Rwoh arranges her own group of Jedi to assess the situation on Khofar. At the Stranger's camp, Osha confronts the man she previously knew as Qimir, though he has adopted a tranquil demeanor. The Stranger claims he used to be a Jedi, insisting that the Jedi method is not the only way to access the Force.

Osha thinks the Stranger's emotional approach leads to the dark side, and she refuses to kill him when he grants her the chance. On Sol's ship, the Jedi Master remains unaware of his companion's true identity until Bazil warns him, prompting Sol to stun Mae.

The Stranger states he is in search of the power of two, suggesting Osha try on his helmet. Aboard his ship, Sol tells Mae they will talk about what occurred on Brendok and then rescue Osha. Meanwhile, Osha places the Stranger's helmet on her head…

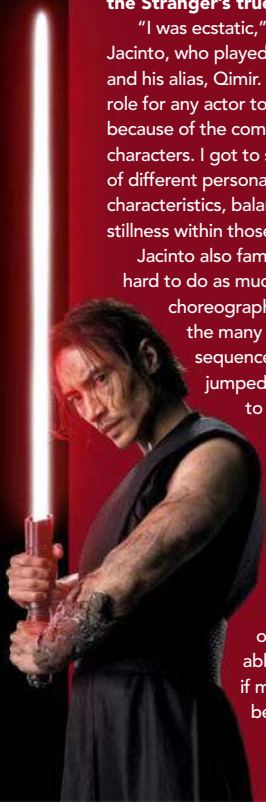
INSIDER INTEL

THE STRANGER UNMASKED

The identity of the mysterious Sith Lord first glimpsed in the final trailer for the series was revealed mid-season, in a shocking twist that saw the end of Padawan Jecki Lon and the Stranger's true face.

"I was ecstatic," says actor Manny Jacinto, who played both the Stranger and his alias, Qimir. "It was a dream role for any actor to be able to tackle because of the complexities of both characters. I got to show a spectrum of different personality traits and characteristics, balancing chaos and stillness within those two characters."

Jacinto also famously trained hard to do as much of his own stunt choreography as possible during the many lightsaber battle sequences. "I absolutely jumped on the opportunity to be able to do my own stunts," Jacinto explains. "I come from a dance background, and you really start to notice that your body doesn't move the same as you get older. I needed to be able to do this so that if my kids watch it, I can be like, 'I did that.'"



EPISODE 7: "CHOICE"

Written by Charmaine DeGraté and Jen Richards & Jasmyne Flournoy
Directed by Kogonada
Premiered: July 9, 2024

Sixteen years earlier, Master Indara leads Sol, Kelnacca, and Torbin on an expedition to uncover why life on Brendok had recovered from a hyperspace disaster. Sol considers the rejuvenation to be the result of a vergence, a concentration of Force energy that can create life.

After locating Osha, Mae, and the witches' coven, Sol becomes convinced that the Jedi must intervene on the children's behalf. Although Mother Aniseya permits the Jedi to test the girls' Force aptitude, blood readings reveal the twins were likely artificially created from a single consciousness.

Torbin rushes off to prove the existence of a vergence. Fearing for the children's safety, Sol regroups with Torbin and intends to stop the Ascension ceremony. As the witches prepare for battle, Mae accidentally ignites a fire and quickly seeks help. Mae's arrival initiates a series of unfortunate events, as Mother Aniseya is killed by Sol and the rest of the coven falls while trying to influence Kelnacca's mind.

Struggling to save both Osha and Mae from a fatal plunge, Sol chooses to concentrate all his energy on rescuing Osha. Back on the Jedi ship, the *Polan*, Indara reprimands Sol yet refrains from telling the Council about Sol's rash decisions in order to protect Osha's future as a Jedi.

EPISODE 8: "THE ACOLYTE"

Written by Jason Micallef
Directed by Hanelle M. Culpepper
Premiered: July 16, 2024

In the Stranger's cave, Osha experiences a premonition of Mae killing Sol and agrees to take the Stranger to their location in exchange for the use of his ship. In orbit above Brendok, Mae escapes from Sol and crashes onto the planet's surface. The Jedi detect Sol's transponder beacon, so Master Vernestra gathers Jedi to accompany her to Brendok.

Sol follows Mae to the coven's fortress, but the Stranger intercepts him and instigates a lightsaber duel. Osha finds Mae, yet doesn't believe her sister's accusation that Sol murdered their mother. Mae evades Osha, interrupting Sol's clash with the Stranger. Sol argues that Mother Aniseya harnessed the Force to create Mae and Osha, insisting he lied to protect that secret.

Osha overhears Sol admit to killing her mother and uses the Force to strangle her former master. Osha and Mae flee into the wilderness, and Osha agrees to become the Stranger's pupil in exchange for Mae's freedom. The Jedi soon take Mae into custody, but the Stranger has wiped his identity and all memory of her sister from her mind.

Vernestra orchestrates her own cover up, telling the chancellor that Sol went rogue and slaughtered his fellow Jedi before ending his own life. As Osha and the Stranger stand hand in hand on the unknown planet where a mysterious figure lurks, Vernestra visits a familiar Jedi Master on Coruscant…

INSIDER INTEL
VERNESTRA RWOH LIVES

Fans of the *Star Wars: The High Republic* books and comics knew Vernestra Rwoh back when she was a precocious teenage prodigy with purple hair, but Rebecca Henderson's live-action portrayal showed the character 100 years older and, maybe, wiser.

"I did a lot of homework," Henderson says, including reading Justina Ireland's books introducing young Rwoh soon after she became a Jedi Knight. "With Vernestra, in the makeup chair every day there was a slow transformation, watching her appear in front of my eyes. I just didn't feel like myself in the boots and the robes. And Lee Jung-jae (Master Sol) is such an incredible actor and an incredible person. When Sol and Vernestra were together, it helped me drop in even further into who she was. By the end of the season, Vernestra had been pulled in many different directions, but she believed that she was doing the right thing."

"Chone Ateema Ree Makacheesa!"

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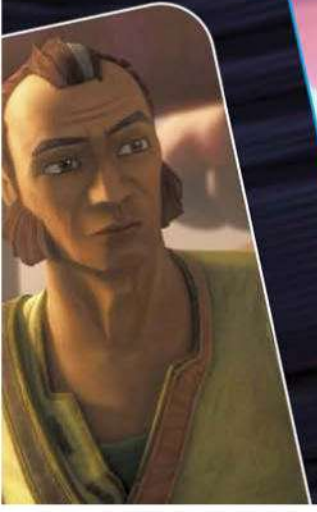
BAKER'S

From Clone Captain Rex to Nubs, Dee Bradley Baker has cooked up voices for a multitude of *Star Wars* characters. The actor tells *Insider* how he finds each one's magic ingredient.

WORDS: TARA BENNETT

BATCH



Remove anything *Star Wars* related from actor Dee Bradley Baker's resume, and he *still* has a dizzyingly impressive tally of iconic character voice performances to his name. From Looney Tunes to *Scooby-Doo* and just about every cartoon show on Nickelodeon, Baker has added his malleable tones to a wide variety of animated series, videogames, and movies too numerous to mention.

While it feels like Baker has been a part of the *Star Wars* galaxy forever, it was only 16 years ago that he was first brought in to voice clone troopers Captain Rex and Commander Cody in the 2008 animated film, *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. He continued to voice all the clone trooper characters in *The Clone Wars* TV series and has lent his vocal talents to a dozen other official *Star Wars* projects, including *Young Jedi Adventures* and LEGO *Star Wars: Rebuild the Galaxy,* along with the recently concluded *The Bad Batch.* Not a bad legacy for a theater kid raised in Greeley, Colorado, who says he was forever changed after seeing *A New Hope* at age 13. "It just blew me away and was central to everything that I thought was awesome and cool," Baker reminisces. "But I couldn't imagine being a part of that. I didn't know how. I didn't think that would even be possible, it seemed so unreachable and unattainable. So, my career has been an unimaginable wish-fulfillment of childhood yearning and aspiration."

Baker adds that, if he's honest, there might have been a drop of manifestation in there too. "When *A New Hope* came out in 1977, my parents made me a Jawa costume that I wore for Halloween," the actor recalls. "When the film was re-released in the summer of 1978, I was hired to work at the local cinema to be a Jawa all summer. So, actually, *that* was my first *Star Wars* gig," he laughs.

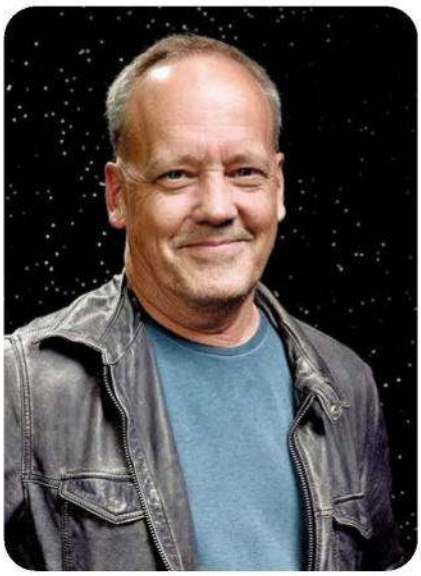
Baker's first professional voice work was as the rock-god Olmec in the 90s Nickelodeon game show, *Legends of the Hidden Temple*. After moving to Los Angeles, he started booking voice work for an array of animated series and began to hone his craft in creating voice characters.

Still much in demand, the actor says he considers his style of performance to be a throwback to the days of vaudeville and silent movies. "Those were a more economical form of public theater," he explains. "They had similar time constraints to animation—short-form storytelling, not a two-hour show—and they played to the back of the house. Very clear and, at times, very outlandish, inventive, and very theatrical.

"The entertainment industry then broadened out into feature films and long-form stuff," he continues, "but the short-form economy of stories still lives on in the television format, which has kept storytelling more concise. And you have things like Looney Tunes, which is like the logical extension of vaudeville, where you're utterly free in terms of what you can do. And if you get the right voice actor, like Mel Blanc, you can take things as far as you want to."

With his work on *Star Wars*, Baker says it's one of the rare storytelling worlds that encourages him to be wild and inventive. "*Star Wars* has other planets, other species, and other worlds, but you're contained—and it's very helpful to be contained, actually—by the format, which are these 10- or 20-minute chunks of storytelling," he says, quoting the typical lengths of an animation episode. "It's very much connected to the legacy that was established in Hollywood over 100 years ago."

01 Dee bradley Baker, the man of a thousand clone voices!



02 Captain Rex, voiced by Baker in *The Clone Wars* and *Rebels*.

03 Rex was just one of many clone trooper voices provided by Baker.

04

"My career has been an unimaginable wish-fulfillment of childhood yearning and aspiration."

A great example of that is his latest character Nubs, a Pooba Jedi youngling in *Young Jedi Adventures*. An instant fan favorite, Baker says conjuring the voice of a new creature out of "thin air" is the most fun you can have in his job.

Describing how the magic happens, Baker says he always begins with the script and meeting with a series' creators and writers. "They usually have a very clear vision in their heads in terms of what they want, or at least in terms of the tone that they want," he says. "And then, when I see the artwork and the script, I'll work with them to come up with something that solves the riddle of a character, to make something that fits in effortlessly with the story that they're telling, that moves it along and integrates with it in this invisibly beautiful way that isn't odd, or arbitrary, or generic. And from that, I access my little vocal orchestra of instruments, then we're off to the races. We're ready to launch that spaceship."

But what about the challenge of voicing all the adult clones in a series like *The Bad Batch*? When Baker entered the sound booth to record a script, he was often shifting between characters without anyone else to play against—a one-man vocal band.

"I've relaxed into the juggling match of reading through a scene, or an episode, where it's mostly just me talking to myself," Baker laughs. "I have to make the sound of each voice not just clear and accurate, but also to play out with the choreography of a scene, and the presence and the energy charge that's playing out as well.

"Way back at the start of *The Clone Wars*, when we didn't even know if that was going to work or not, I was a little more freaked out about doing it," he admits. "Now, I've nailed the magic trick of jumping from

05

04 Nubs, the effervescent Pooba in *Young Jedi Adventures*.

05 Baker is the voice of Nubs.

06 Clone Force 99 (played by Baker) made their debut in Season 7 of *The Clone Wars*.

VOICE CONTROL

How does Dee Bradley Baker keep his vocal instrument healthy and vibrant? The actor shares his philosophy about keeping his throat tuned up and fresh.

"When you're young or you're starting out, you can expend a lot of energy as a performer that is inefficient and wasteful. It works against you, especially as a voice actor when you're doing things that are often very broad, or, in my case, very unusual.

"It takes a while to learn how to relax into a clear, creative power that gets the job done. It's a big thing to learn. I trained with an opera singer early in my career, and he was a really great teacher. He showed me how to place my voice and how to place effort in a way that is powerful but relaxed. It's a mechanical process to me, to avoid damaging myself. Otherwise, I always hydrate."

06

07

character to character to character as we move through a scene. I'm used to bringing this all into one symphonic sound together. It's something that doesn't feel as daunting or frightening to me as it once did, because the writing was very clear on what had to happen in the story."

Are there any special tips or tricks that Baker holds onto, aside from the benefits of experience? The actor says he kept notes on certain prominent clones, or ones that he knew he would be asked to revisit.

"A clone who had multiple appearances within an arc or within a season, for instance, I would make some notes on them. Just a shorthand sketch of what made the guy unique, and how to 'hang my helmet,' vocally," Baker explains. "And the last resort was to have the audio engineer quickly dial up that particular clone, so we could hear what he'd sounded like before to ensure there was a continuity to what had already been established. Because that was very important to me, to keep these guys not only sounding different, but to maintain a continuity of character through the multiple times that we ended up seeing them, because they were *different* people."

07 Crosshair and Wrecker from *The Bad Batch.*

09

09 Baker performed as Nix in the videogame *Star Wars* Outlaws.

"It's wonderful as an actor to be in the playpen that so enthralled me when I was a kid."

Baker says he's always kept that idea front of mind and voice, that the clones were never just indiscriminate drones. "It was very clear in the prequel films that it was humans versus droids. And that's what George Lucas and Dave Filoni underscored when they launched into *The Clone Wars* series. These clones were *human*, they were distinct individuals. And so, a big part of the mission for me doing all those shows, all these seasons, was to make each of those guys their own person."

08

08 A not-so-cuddly Nubs in LEGO *Star Wars: Rebuild the Galaxy.*

With his recent galactic performances in the Disney+ streaming mini-series, LEGO *Star Wars: Rebuild the Galaxy*, and as the character Nix in the videogame *Star Wars* Outlaws, Baker is evidently happy to play new characters in the *Star Wars* sandbox for as long as producers cast him.

"It's wonderful as an actor to be in the playpen that so enthralled me when I was a kid," Baker says with gratitude. "This is the stuff that I thought was the coolest thing in the world, and it still is. To be a part of it, and to be a significant part of the grand collaboration that these stories are, it's gratifying on so many levels. As an actor, you want to make something that connects with people, that means something, that people love, and that tells a good story. My incredulity is boundless at how wonderful it is and how much fun I'm having."

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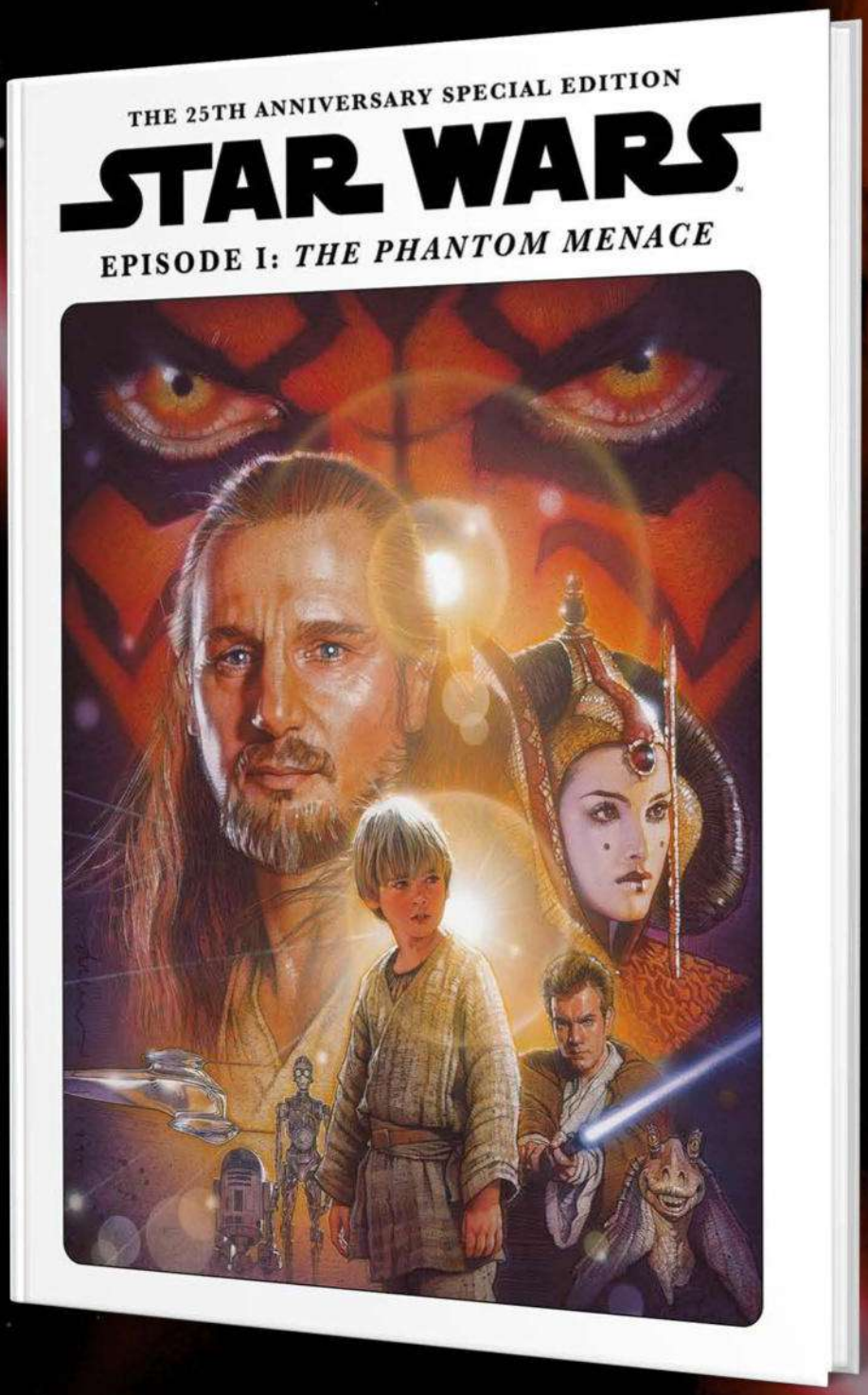

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CARAVAN OF COURAGE
AN EWOK ADVENTURE

ERA OF THE EWOKS

With the release of *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi* in 1983, almost everyone believed the epic movie series had come to an end. But had it? Just one year later, the Ewoks staked their claim to the galaxy far, far away with *Caravan of Courage: An Ewok Adventure*.

WORDS: AREZOU AMIN

It's hard to conceive at this point in *Star Wars* history, but there was a time back in 1983 that general audiences truly believed the original three *Star Wars* movies were all there would ever be. Even hardcore fans were skeptical, despite George Lucas having gone on record during production of *The Empire Strikes Back* saying that he planned to make a nine-film saga. In his *Return of the Jedi* review, critic Roger Ebert suggested that if Lucas succeeded in his plan, it would be through the sheer determination of the filmmaker alone.

As it transpired, audiences waited 16 years for Lucas to return to the Skywalker saga with his prequel trilogy, which stand as testament to the determination Ebert predicted in his review. It would take nearly four decades (36 years, to be precise) before Lucas' nine-film tally would be realized, albeit with different creatives at the helm. But that's cinema. It would be on television that *Star Wars* first found a new home, decades before Disney+, and it would come wrapped in a fuzzy, spear-wielding package.

Riding The Caravan

The 1984 TV movie *The Ewok Adventure*, as it was known at the time of its original transmission on the ABC network in the U.S., began life as a story George Lucas had written for his daughter, Amanda, who had fallen in love with *Return of the Jedi*'s Ewoks. Following the success of *Jedi*, Lucas partnered with ABC to develop an hour-long family special to air around the 1984 Thanksgiving holiday, but the network wanted something longer, something closer to the two-hour mark, and the idea of an Ewok TV movie was born.

01 Poster artwork for *Caravan of Courage: An Ewok Adventure* by Drew Struzan.

Having considered such titles as *The Ewoks of Endor* and *The Ewok Holiday Special*, they eventually settled on naming it *The Ewok Adventure*, and Bob Carrau (previously George Lucas' executive assistant) came onboard to handle screenwriting duties. Directing the project would be another Lucas collaborator, John Korty, who had previously co-directed the animated comedy *Twice Upon a Time* (1983), co-produced by Lucasfilm. Pre-production got underway in April of 1984, and location filming took place later that spring, primarily at Roy's Redwood Reserve in Marin County. Some scenes were also shot within the environs of Skywalker Ranch itself.

With a relatively low budget of $3 million, *The Ewok Adventure* needed to considerably scale back production costs compared to the figures previously associated with a *Star Wars* movie (*Return of the Jedi* was made for a reported $32.5 million, for example). The Ewok costumes created by Stuart Freeborn for *Return of the Jedi* were reused, and their village was moved to the forest floor rather than high in the treetops. The filmmakers relied on tried-and-true special effects to replicate the visual splendor of the theatrical movies on a television budget, as opposed to innovating, with matte paintings being used to add scale and depth to the Ewok village. Production designer Joe Johnston once referred to the techniques they used as "primitive," noting that, "We did forced perspectives and glass paintings, back-to-basics things that had been around since the 1920s." Johnston added that Lucas instructed them to "go out there and have some fun with it," but *An Ewok Adventure* also served as an opportunity for Lucasfilm to gain some television experience, and to give personnel without much on-set experience a chance to learn and experiment.

02 Cindel (Aubree Miller, left) and her brother Mace (Eric Walker, right) were aided by Logray, the Ewok medicine man (Bobby Bell).

03 Left to right: Chukha-Trok (Kevin Thompson); Deej (Dan Frishman); Weechee (Debbie Carrington) and Mace (Eric Walker).

INSIDER INTEL

WICKET SPEAKS!

While Warwick Davis reprised his role as Wicket W. Warwick from *Return of the Jedi* in both Ewok TV movies, the character needed a voice as Wicket learned to speak Basic from Cindel. The Ewok's dialog was performed by Darryl Henriques.

Tale Of The Towanis

While Lucas' vision for a one-hour family special had increased in scale, *The Ewok Adventure* still retained the ideas that had been the core of his original story. The plot followed the Towani family, whose space cruiser had crash-landed on Endor. Parents Jeremitt and Catarine (played by Guy Boyd and Fionnula Flanagan) disappear, leaving behind their teenage son Mace, played by Eric Walker, and Cindel, played by a four-year-old Aubree Miller, in her debut role. Left behind on the ship, the siblings are found by Deej Warrick and his sons, Weechee and Widdle, and the Ewoks lead them back to their village, where they meet Wicket, played once again by Warwick Davis. Together, the children and the Ewoks embark on an adventure to reunite Mace and Cindel with their parents.

The Ewok Adventure premiered on November 25, 1984, to an audience of a whopping 65 million viewers. In some cities in the U.S., local radio stations got in on the fun that night, simulcasting the audio with the ABC broadcast to achieve a "stereo" effect years before stereo sound became commonplace on TV sets. *An Ewok Adventure* proved

04

just as popular with awards bodies as it was with audiences, as the TV movie was nominated for two Emmys; one for Outstanding Children's Programming, and the other for Outstanding Special Visual Effects. The film received a theatrical release in Ireland in December 1984, and was subsequently released across Europe, in the U.K., and in South America during the winter, spring, and summer of 1985. This theatrical run was when the movie was given the full title by which we know it today: *Caravan of Courage: An Ewok Adventure*.

04 Left to right: Widdle (Tony Cox); Mace (Eric Walker); Jeremitt (Guy Boyd); Catarine (Fionula Flanagan); Cindel (Aubree Miller) and Wicket (Warwick Davis).

05 Cindel (Miller) with Wicket W. Warrick (Warwick Davis).

The Ewok Invasion

While *Caravan of Courage* did not receive the theatrical treatment stateside, that doesn't mean the Ewoks didn't get a merchandise launch to match its cinematic predecessors, benefitting from the TV movie's proximity to the ongoing marketing of *Return of the Jedi*. Many of the toys and books released around the time of the TV special were part of the *Return of the Jedi* product rollout.

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The popularity of *Star Wars* toys didn't catch anyone off guard in the way it had back in 1977, and Kenner was ready to release their first wave of *Return of the Jedi* action figures alongside the movie, with additional figures following over the next couple of years. Ewoks were part of that drop, with Chief Chirpa and Logray being immortalized in plastic, while an Ewok Village playset followed not long after. Wicket, perhaps the most famous Ewok and the star of *Caravan of Courage*, wouldn't get his own figure until 1984, released alongside figures of Teebo, Lumat, and Paploo. There were two more ▸

playsets: the Ewok Assault Catapult and the Ewok Combat Glider, and 1985 Kenner's Power of the Force collection included two additional Ewoks—Romba and Warok—as well as the Ewok Battle Wagon. As synonymous as action figures have become with the movie series, however, they hardly scream "cute and cuddly"—the primary descriptor of an Ewok, at least at face value. Appropriately then, the *Return of the Jedi* merchandise rollout also included Ewok plush toys, including Kneesaa, Latara, Paploo, Wicket, and six Woklings: Gwig, Leeni, Malani, Mookiee, Nippet, and Wiley.

Publishing was another element of the *Return of the Jedi* marketing push that gave prominence to the all-conquering Ewoks, including a handful of storybooks aimed at young readers. A read-along "Book and Record" retelling of the TV movie was joined on shelves by *The Ewoks and the Lost Children*, which used stills from *The Ewok Adventure* as illustrations.

INSIDER INTEL

CINDEL TOWANI

Five-year-old Cindel Towani was played by Aubree Miller, who was a year younger than the character at the time of filming, and the same age as George Lucas' daughter, Amanda, for whom the story was originally written.

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06 Director John Korty (left) with Warwick Davis as Wicket.

07 The Towanis reunited, in this rare behind-the-scenes shot.

08 Ewok merch included
09 plush dolls, a read-along audiobook, and a storybook retelling.

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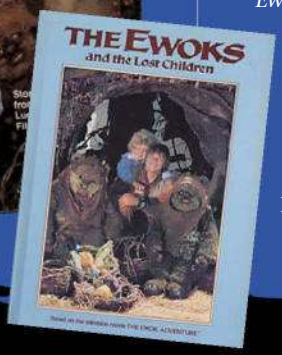

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Ewok Mania

Ewok mania continued into 1985 with the release of two exciting new television projects. The first was an animated series, originally entitled *Ewoks*, then renamed *The All-New Ewoks* for its second season. The series went into production in 1984 and was produced by the Canadian animation studio Nelvana—the same studio behind *The Faithful Wookiee* segment of the 1978 *Star Wars Holiday Special*. The series was written by *Caravan of Courage* scripter Bob Carrau and Paul Dini (Dini would later go on to work on the *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* animated series).

Ewoks focused on the crazy misadventures of younger members of the tribe—Wicket, Princess Kneesaa, Teebo, Paploo, and their friends, and inspired a new line of action figures from Kenner, this time based on

11

INSIDER INTEL

THE GORAX

Jon Berg, the designer of *Caravan of Courage*'s antagonist the Gorax, not only played the creature in costume but also animated the stop-motion model of the beast.

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11 Teek (Niki Botelho, left) joined Wicket and the gang in *The Battle for Endor*.

12 *Caravan of Courage* was soon followed by the *Ewoks* animated series.

13 The *Ewoks* comic, as published by Star Comics.

the cartoony look of the animated series' lead characters. These bolder and more colorful Ewok designs were also picked up by the producers of a touring variety show, *Bravo America: Bold-Bright-Beautiful*, as the Ewoks continued their quest for world domination with an ice-skating segment called *The Ewoks and the Magic Sunberries*. That's right. Ewoks. On ice!

In November 1985, two months after the launch of the *Ewoks* and its animated sister series *Droids*, a sequel to *Caravan of Courage*—*Ewoks: The Battle for Endor*—premiered on ABC. The second TV movie was much darker in tone, killing off the entire Towani family (except for Cindel) within the opening few minutes. The plot revolves around Cindel, Wicket, and their friends battling to defend Endor from a gang of marauders, led by an evil witch named Charal (played by British actor Siân Phillips). The character was later revealed to be a Nightsister in the 1995 reference book, *The Illustrated Star Wars Universe*.

Whether you'd taken to the Ewoks in *Return of the Jedi* or not (and opinion at the time was divided), there was no escaping their mass market appeal. Gary Arnold of *The Washington Post* went so far as to suggest the Ewoks were an allegory for the children in the audience, being swept away in the fantastical adventure that is *Star Wars*. Today, the Ewoks are as integral to the mythos as Luke Skywalker, Wookiees, and the *Millennium Falcon*, which is in no small part due to their adventures beyond the confines of the theatrical movies in *Caravan of Courage* and *The Battle for Endor*. Both TV movies made their streaming debut on Disney+ in 2021, closing the circle that had begun in 1984, and allowing new generations of fans to enjoy their quirky take on the galaxy far, far away.

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14 Wicket and Cindel were together again for the second TV move.

15 The poster for *Ewoks: The Battle for Endor*.

INQUISITOR COUNTDOWN

WHO WERE THE DARK FORCES OF THE JEDI HUNTERS?

Star Wars Insider **investigates the Inquisitors, whose stories have been told in animation, live-action, comics, books, and videogames.**

WORDS: AMY RICHAU

Order 66 marked the termination of the Jedi Order. The massacre of Jedi Knights by their former allies, the clone troopers, was key in Palpatine's plot to undermine the Republic and reshape it into the First Galactic Empire, under his command. There were some Jedi, however (including Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi) who were able to escape the carnage. To track down such surviving Jedi, as well as uncover any children across the galaxy who showed signs of Force sensitivity, Palpatine enlisted Darth Vader, to lead a group of former Jedi known as the Inquisitorius.

Given numbers to replace their names, Inquisitors hunted down rogue Jedi, along with those who Palpatine saw as a potential future threat, and who Vader referred to as "Children of the Force." Any children who would not join the dark side to serve Palpatine were eliminated. These were dark times indeed.

Inquisitors varied from disgruntled Jedi who had swapped sides around the time of Order 66, to those who were forced to turn to the dark side after lengthy torture sessions. They were trained under Vader, first on Coruscant, then later at a dedicated base on the watery Mustafar moon of Nur. While some Inquisitors were human, many were not. A double-bladed lightsaber that could spin, allowing Inquisitors to hover in the air, was a common weapon. Led internally by the Grand Inquisitor, members of the group frequently fought for status within their ranks in order to impress Lord Vader. During their hunts, Inquisitors were regularly paired with specially trained stormtroopers known as purge Troopers, in their efforts to uncover Jedi.

How many of these deadly assassins were there? As they were identified numerically, we know there were at least 13. *Star Wars Insider* takes stock of the known Inquisitors and recounts the roles they played in this horrifying era in galactic history.

THIRTEENTH SISTER

Born Iskat Akaris on the planet Pkori, the Thirteenth Sister studied under Master Sember Vey and fought for the Jedi during the First Battle of Geonosis. The novel *Star Wars Inquisitor: Rise of the Red Blade* followed Iskat on her path from Knight to Inquisitor.

Feeling disillusioned with the Jedi Order, Iskat willfully joined the Inquisitorius ranks shortly after Order 66. The Thirteenth Sister killed several Jedi during her missions for Darth Vader, but yearned to be free from the rules of any organization. Her love for fellow Inquisitor Tualon Yaluna led to her death in Marvel Comics' *Darth Vader: Dark Lord of the Sith*, when Vader sensed the duo's connection and destroyed them both.

TENTH BROTHER

As a Jedi during the Clone Wars in the comic series *Jedi of the Republic: Mace Windu*, Prosset Dibs was found guilty by the Jedi Council of insubordination and treason after attacking one of their own during a mission. Dibs believed war was no place for the Jedi, and felt betrayed by the Council, making him an easy target to turn to the dark side. While Dibs was blind, his high intuition levels gave him a strong connection to the Force as both a Jedi and later as the Tenth Brother. In *Darth Vader: Dark Lord of the Sith*, he accompanied Vader on a mission to Mon Cala, where he was killed by clone troopers, who still perceived him as Jedi.

NINTH SISTER

The Ninth Sister's life as an Inquisitor was dominated by pain and suffering. Once known as the Jedi Knight Masana Tide, she was tortured by the Empire until turning to the dark side. Losing an eye to Darth Vader during a training exercise, the Ninth Sister also lost a limb to the Sixth Brother during a mission to Mon Cala in *Darth Vader: Dark Lord of the Sith*. Skilled at reading other's emotions, the Ninth Sister enjoyed taunting her prey. In the videogames Jedi: Fallen Order and Jedi: Survivor, the Ninth Sister told Cal Kestis that she would enjoy delivering him to the Inquisitorius to see him turned, but Kestis bested her in both their battles, decapitating her on Coruscant after trying to remind her about her life as a Jedi.

EIGHTH BROTHER

While searching for a Sith holocron in *Star Wars Rebels*, the Eighth Brother crossed paths with Ezra Bridger, Kanan Jarrus, and Ahsoka Tano. The dark-side warrior leaned heavily on his double-bladed lightsaber during combat, which was equipped with a deadly saw attachment. More rash in his actions than his fellow Inquisitors, the Eighth Brother often acted before thinking. Despite his lightsaber being damaged in a battle with Kanan Jarrus, the Eighth Brother tried to escape the fight by using its spinning feature as a means of flight. However, the weapon malfunctioned and he fell to his death.

SEVENTH SISTER

More patient and cruel than many of her fellow Inquisitors, in *Star Wars Rebels* the Seventh Sister waited for her prey to make a mistake, or chose to keep her prey alive as bait to ensnare a larger number of victims. Not much is known about the Seventh Sister's time as a Jedi, except that she once trained with Master Aayla Secura. Hunting down many Force-sensitives during the Imperial era, the Seventh Sister focused much of her time tracking Ahsoka Tano. To aid in her hunt, she used several ID9 seeker droids to help find and subdue Jedi and Force-sensitive children. The Seventh Sister met her death at the end of Maul's lightsaber blade on Malachor, alongside the Fifth and Eighth Brothers.

SIXTH BROTHER

The Sixth Brother lost an arm to Darth Vader early in his training as an Inquisitor. Vader described this act of violence as teaching the Sixth Brother—formerly known as Bil Valen—a lesson in loss he would never forget. In *Darth Vader: Dark Lord of the Sith*, the Sixth Brother's brutal actions mimicked Vader's when he cut off the leg of one of his fellow Inquisitors, the Ninth Sister, to aid in his own escape during a mission to Mon Cala.

FIFTH BROTHER

Serving Palpatine and Darth Vader for many years, the Fifth Brother's devotion to the hunt for Jedi never wavered. In the comic series, *Darth Vader: Dark Lord of the Sith*, the Fifth Brother joined Vader on a mission to track down former Council member Eeth Koth, shortly after the rise of the Empire. Working with the Grand Inquisitor, the Fifth Brother hunted another Jedi in *Star Wars: Obi-Wan Kenobi*, making it clear to the Third Sister that he felt superior to her and other Inquisitors he deemed unworthy. Throughout the years, the Fifth Brother battled many rebel groups, including the *Singer Mantis* crew in the novel *Star Wars Jedi: Battle Scars*.

The Fifth Brother met his end on Malachor in *Star Wars Rebels*, fighting several members of the Spectre cell when Maul killed him after he was disarmed by Ahsoka Tano.

FOURTH SISTER

An early convert to the dark side, imprisoned Jedi Knight Bariss Offee called the Fourth Sister by her previous name, Lyn, when she came to recruit Offee into the Inquisitorius during the chaos of Order 66. Brutal and blindly loyal to Palpatine and Vader, the Fourth Sister believed any Jedi given the opportunity to serve the dark side and hunt former Jedi should consider themselves lucky. The Fourth Sister joined the Fifth Brother and the Grand Inquisitor in their hunt for a Jedi on Tatooine in *Obi-Wan Kenobi*. In the *Star Wars: Tales of the Empire* episode, "No Way Out," Offee tried to convince Fourth Sister to turn back to the light side, and audiences saw the first hint of kindness in the Fourth Sister's actions. How her story continues has yet to be told.

THIRD SISTER

The Third Sister was unique among Inquisitors in that she was never a true believer. While she zealously tracked down Jedi for the Empire, the Third Sister's true goal was to exact revenge on Darth Vader himself.

As a Jedi trainee on Coruscant, the Third Sister—then known as Reva—saw Anakin Skywalker turn against the Jedi during Order 66, slaughtering her teachers and fellow students. As one of the few people aware of the Sith Lord's true identity, the Third Sister also knew the person Vader would very much like to face again was his former master. The Disney+ series *Obi-Wan Kenobi* followed Reva's journey from an Inquisitor obsessed with finding Kenobi to the moment on Tatooine where she chose mercy, discarding her Inquisitor lightsaber rather than taking the life of young Luke Skywalker.

SECOND SISTER

Jedi Padawan Trilla Suduri became the Second Sister shortly after Order 66, when Imperials captured and tortured her. The videogame *Star Wars* Jedi: Fallen Order revealed the Second Sister's painful past during her hunt for Jedi Cal Kestis and Trilla's former master, Cere Junda.

The Second Sister's anger against the Jedi was fueled by feelings of betrayal as she believed Cere abandoned her when she should have been protecting her. Cal Kestis battled the Second Sister on Fortress Inquisitorius, where they fought over a holocron filled with the names of Force-sensitive children. While the Second Sister survived her fight with Kestis and appeared close to reconciling with Cere, she was not as fortunate with Darth Vader, who swiftly struck her down for failing in her mission.

THE GRAND INQUISITOR

Once a Jedi Temple Guard, the Grand Inquisitor resented his lack of access to the Order's secrets. As an Inquisitor, the Pau'an led efforts to hunt down the Jedi, tested prospective Inquisitors, and created a list of surviving Force users for Darth Vader.

Among the Grand Inquisitor's early targets was Tensu Run, a Jedi Knight who inspired hope in the fight against the Empire in the Marvel Comics' series *Star Wars: Inquisitors*. A master of deception, the Grand Inquisitor helped Vader unearth the Third Sister's betrayal in *Obi-Wan Kenobi*, where he and the Sith Lord also learned of a secret rebel network called the Hidden Path. The Grand Inquisitor later spent much time hunting down members of the Spectre cell in *Star Wars Rebels*. After losing a battle with Kanan Jarrus, the Grand Inquisitor attempted to end his own life, but Darth Vader forced his spirit to guard an abandoned Jedi Temple, where he later (unsuccessfully) battled Luke Skywalker in Marvel Comics' *Star Wars* #6 (2020).

THE MYSTERY MEN

Two more Inquisitors also made appearances in the *Star Wars* animated anthology miniseries *Tales of the Jedi* and *Tales of the Empire*, but their identities were shrouded in mystery.

Ahsoka Tano faced an unnamed Inquisitor who wore a demonic, bird-like mask in the *Tales of the Jedi* Episode 6: "Resolve." Unnamed, that is, until recently when it was discovered that the Inquisitor in question was the Eleventh Brother.

Another masked Inquisitor, later glimpsed in the final scenes of the *Tales of the Empire* Episode 4: "Devoted," had already been seen on-screen in *Star Wars: Ahsoka*.

Known as Marrok in the series set during the New Republic era, years after the Inquisitor's reign of terror had ended, he became a mercenary in the employ of Morgan Elsbeth. The dark-side warrior seemingly died (disappearing in a cloud of green mist) following a lightsaber battle with Ahsoka Tano on Seatos; fans suspected his Imperial past based on his use of an Inquisitor's dual-bladed lightsaber.

THE REDEMPTION OF BARRISS OFFEE

Jedi Knight Barriss Offee played a significant role in the final months of the Clone Wars, betraying both the Jedi and her friend, Ahsoka Tano, but her story moved forward in Lucasfilm Animation's 2024 series *Star Wars: Tales of the Empire*. Actor Meredith Salenger discusses the latest twists in the character's journey.

WORDS: TARA BENNETT

01 Barriss Offee (voiced by Meredith Salenger) went from Inquisitor to healer in *Tales of the Empire*.

If you're a member of Generation X, there's a good chance that you know actress Meredith Salenger from her role as Natty Gann, a scrappy Depression-era kid at the center of the 1985 Walt Disney Pictures film, *The Journey of Natty Gann*. And even if you don't, the important thing is that Lucasfilm chief creative officer Dave Filoni was a fan, remembered Salenger's performance, and cast her in the role of Barriss Offee in *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. *Insider* recently met with the actor to talk about the character's return and redemptive story arc in *Star Wars: Tales of the Empire*.

> "MY ATTACH ON THE TEMPLE WAS AN ATTACK ON WHAT THE JEDI HAVE BECOME. AN ARMY FIGHTING FOR THE DARK SIDE." BARRISS OFFEE.

***Star Wars Insider:* You attribute your casting in *Star Wars* to a wild animal. Can you explain?**

Meredith Salenger: I believe the reason I got the role of Barriss Offee is because Dave Filoni is a huge fan of wolves, and in *The Journey of Natty Gann*, my character was on a journey with a wolf. I think that was probably in the back of his mind when he was looking for a voice for Barriss. He and I later bonded over our love of wolves, so, yeah, I think Natty Gann was probably an impetus for why I got the part.

As a kid of the 1980s, where did *Star Wars* rank in your young life?

I remember going to see *Star Wars: A New Hope*; it was the first time I ever saw a movie that had a line around the block. I stood in that line with my dad. I loved it. I am a huge fan of every single character but, how cool was Princess Leia? She was the beginning of the strong woman role. I started acting when I was eight years old, and people joke that Natty Gann is like the Tom Waits of Disney princesses. I love that I have been a Disney girl from the beginning. And then to work on *The Clone Wars* and *Tales of the Empire*, and to be part of the *Star Wars* galaxy and connected with Disney, it's like both are my life.

How intimidating was it to get that first *Star Wars* gig?

Of course, I had seen all the movies by the time I got the role, but honestly, I think my intense fandom didn't really start until I met Dave Filoni. He explained *The Clone Wars* characters and the history behind all of them so well, and he had such enthusiasm for it. Once I started playing Barriss, I went back and re-watched all the *Star Wars* movies again, because when Dave talks about *Star Wars* it's like, "Well, you know, da, da, da...." and I would think to myself, *Do I know that? Let me go research that.* I even started watching spoof versions of *Star Wars*, like all the *Robot Chicken* stuff.

Did Dave Filoni share anything with you about Barriss' new arc before you saw the scripts for *Tales of the Empire*, or did you have any idea that her story would continue?

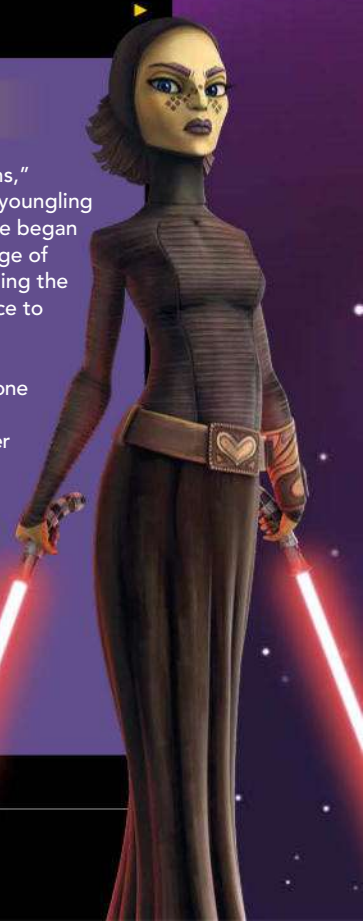
After *The Clone Wars*, everyone kept asking, "What happened with Barriss? Where did Barriss go?" *I* didn't know what happened to her. Whenever I saw or talked with Dave he never gave anything away. He did say that he had something up his sleeve for Barriss, but I had no idea what that would be, or how the character might be reintroduced.

FALL FROM GRACE

The expression "The road to hell is paved with good intentions," could have been coined with Barriss Offee in mind. A devout youngling with a fascination for the ancient Jedi texts, the Mirialan native began her training at the Jedi Temple on Coruscant under the tutelage of Master Luminara Unduli. She fought alongside her master during the First Battle of Geonosis, after which her ability to use the Force to heal others began to reveal itself.

As a Jedi Padawan, Offee formed a close bond with Ahsoka Tano, the apprentice of General Anakin Skywalker during the Clone Wars, and they undertook many missions together. Offee felt great pain and sadness at the increasing number of clone trooper casualties she encountered, and a disillusionment with the Jedi's participation in the war began to foment.

By the time she was promoted to Jedi Knight and made a general, Offee had come into contact with Letta Turmond, an activist who opposed the Jedi's role in the war. Believing that the Order had become the villains of the conflict, they conspired to smuggle nano-bonds into the Jedi Temple on Coruscant, unwittingly ingested by Turmond's husband. The resultant explosion killed many Jedi and civilians, and Offee saw to it that her old friend Ahsoka Tano took the blame.



"I FEEL LIKE AHSOKA AND BARRISS INHERENTLY UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER." MEREDITH SALENGER

02

I haven't been a guest at very many conventions, I've been to maybe four or five, but fans always want to know what happened to her, so I talk about Barriss all the time. Even my best friend's kids watch *The Clone Wars* and brag to their friends, "Oh, I'm pals with Barriss Offee." So, for me, she has never gone away, and I still feel very connected to her.

What was your reaction to where we pick up the character in *Tales*?

Finding her locked up in prison was such a great place to start. Seeing her emotional journey at having been a captive for all that time, thinking about what she had done in framing Ahsoka and turning against the Jedi for having entered a military campaign instead of being the peacekeepers that they were intended to be. To have chosen violence, which she felt had been the only way she could get her point across. I think that she had time to think about those things, to retrospectively consider that they were probably terrible things to have done.

When we first see Barriss in *Tales of the Empire*, she gets presented with an opportunity to be free. It's a pretty daunting offer that she is given, and it doesn't come without major feelings of guilt and shame, but she has a desire to be alive and free.

03

There's always been a strong sense of empathy in your portrayal of Barriss. Was that something you found in the scripts, or did that come from you?

I don't know if there was anything specific, but I think it's something that really connects me with Barriss. Like her, I have an intense desire to do what is right. I have a strong moral center, and I'm a very empathetic person. There's this trained thoughtfulness with Barriss, and a nobility about her that she respects her training. She has a feeling for peacekeeping. She wants to protect people, especially those who have helped her. You see that struggle in *Tales of the Empire* so much. I don't think she can help it. That's just who she is.

I feel like Ahsoka and Barriss inherently understood each other. They grew up together. They learned together, and I think they infused each other's personalities with goodness. Ahsoka knew that Barriss had chosen the wrong way to go about achieving her goals, but also that it was against her nature.

Is there a favorite example of that for you?

At the very end of *Tales of the Empire*, you saw Bariss as an elder and as a healer. You saw people coming to her and calling her "Mother." I bring this up only because a fan recently asked me, "How do you feel about Barriss being referred to as that?" She doesn't have a child of her own, but she does have this maternal quality about her, a need to prevent others going through the same heartache that she went through. And that's all any mother really wants for their children—they want them to live a better, safer life, to give them the wisdom not to make the same mistakes.

Barriss had been through so much. She made her share of mistakes, and I think she felt

04

02 Barriss Offee betrayed Ahsoka Tano during the Clone Wars.

03 Sentenced to prison as a result of her crimes, Offee was spared the horror of Order 66.

04 Offee with the Grand Inquisitor.

05

shame and guilt over it. She's also a fierce warrior, a protector, and a peacekeeper.

Did you ever imagine Barriss would end up so separated from the galaxy in her little pocket of solitude?
No, I did not see that as her trajectory. But you can only fight for so long. I think she fought, fought, fought in *The Clone Wars*. She fought in the *Tales of the Empire*. But I think she ultimately realized it was the soul of the world she had to fight for, and the only way to do that was through love, through changing people's hearts. So yes, to see where her story went, it felt right for her character. It's definitely not what I saw coming for her, but it felt right. She'd come to understand that what she did at the end of *The Clone Wars* was very wrong,

05 Offee was sickened by the acts of the Fourth Sister.

Are you satisfied with where *Tales* left Barriss Offee?
I want to play Barriss until the end of time. I think she's such an interesting character. She's so fascinating. I love looking at her. I love watching her. I love how she's animated. I love playing her. I'm fulfilled with the choices that Dave made for who she became. I don't think that it *needs* to end there, but I'm just an actor who loves playing that part so much and just *being* her. I think Barriss Offee is the coolest, and being part of the *Star Wars* galaxy means so much to me.

06 The Fourth Sister eventually caught up with Offee.

06

INQUISITOR TO HEALER

Confined in a prison cell during the Jedi Purge of Order 66, Barriss Offee was recruited shortly thereafter into the Emperor's Inquisitorius. As a member of this dark force, Offee was responsible for tracking down many Jedi, but she had a change of heart during a mission with the Fourth Sister, a former Jedi named Lyn Rakish. Appalled by Rakish's slaughter of villagers who had sought to protect a fleeing Jedi, Offee fought with the Fourth Sister and tended to the Jedi as they died.

After this, Offee abandoned the Empire and became a healer, helping those in need with her Force abilities. After a mother and father sought her assistance in helping their Force-sensitive child escape the Empire, Offee once again faced Rakish. Seriously injured, the healer still scored a victory, convincing her former friend to question their belief in the Empire.

A CERTAIN POINT OF VIEW

Our resident *Star Wars* expert, Jay Stobie, consults his library of holocrons and ancient Jedi texts to answer your questions about the events, people, and places of the galaxy far, far away....

Concept art by Andrée Wallin

"According to the Rule of Two, the Sith are always paired as a master and an apprentice. How do the Inquisitorius and Knights of Ren fit into this equation?"
Natalie Clarke, Edinburgh, UK

To truly grasp the Rule of Two and its significance, we must dive into Sith history. An offshoot of the Jedi who embraced the dark side, the Sith bitterly fought against their light-side counterparts for a number of years.

Over time, the Sith dwindled until only Darth Bane remained. Acknowledging that treachery and backstabbing contributed to the Sith's decline, Bane established the Rule of Two so that the sect could avoid complete extinction. This directive was designed to avoid self-destruction and decreed there could only be two Sith: a master and an apprentice.

Even so, they were not nearly as formal as their counterparts in the Jedi Order. A former Jedi known as the Stranger claimed that he sought an acolyte and the "*power* of two" during the High Republic's waning years. Despite having an approach that lined up with Bane's decree, the Stranger was not adamant about calling himself a "Sith," asserting that he had no name. Nevertheless, his true allegiances remained elusive, especially concerning a mysterious figure who lurked in the shadows near the Stranger's home.

Not From A Jedi

The Third Sister

Having endured Anakin Skywalker's assault on the Jedi Temple as a child, the Third Sister knew that Anakin had become Darth Vader. A ruthless Inquisitor, Reva's true goal involved exacting revenge on Vader for killing her friends during Order 66, though Obi-Wan Kenobi eventually helped her change paths.

Ap'lek

A cunning Knight of Ren, Ap'lek kept a smoke dispenser in his arsenal and utilized his sensitivity to the Force to detect his foes through the cloudy haze. While he did not carry a lightsaber, Ap'lek wielded an ancient Mandalorian executioner's ax, which had a blade made out of resilient beskar.

The Grand Inquisitor

A Pau'an who formerly served as a Jedi Knight, the Grand Inquisitor led the Inquisitorius and reported directly to Darth Vader. The Grand Inquisitor showed great disdain for the Third Sister, during her pursuit of Obi-Wan Kenobi, and he also played a pivotal role in hunting down Kanan Jarrus and Ezra Bridger.

It is important to remember that Emperor Palpatine was a key factor in the creation of the Inquisitorius and Ben Solo's quest to join the Knights of Ren. As the Republic's supreme chancellor, Palpatine secretly hired Cad Bane to identify and kidnap Force-sensitive children with the hopes of creating his own army. As Emperor, Palpatine placed Darth Vader in charge of employing fallen light siders as Inquisitors to hunt down Jedi. A reborn Palpatine controlled Snoke, and it was the supreme leader who corrupted Ben Solo and recommended his alliance with the Knights of Ren.

Mother Aniseya

As the leader of a coven of witches, Mother Aniseya disagreed with those who considered her connection to the Thread to be dark and unnatural. Though neither Sith nor Jedi, Mother Aniseya emphasized that the power of two exceeded the power of one, going so far as to assert that even greater strength was found in the power of many.

The Fifth Brother

While the Fifth Brother remained loyal to the Inquisitorius, he hoped to earn the title of Grand Inquisitor after his Pau'an predecessor had seemingly been killed during the pursuit of Obi-Wan Kenobi. His ambition put him into direct conflict with Reva, and the two often clashed when undertaking missions to hunt down the hidden Jedi.

Rules Made To Be Broken

Why was Palpatine's involvement relevant to the Rule of Two? Over the decades, the Emperor demonstrated a clear pattern to bending, and more often than not, breaking with rules and traditions. After all, we are talking about the person who killed his master, Darth Plagueis, in his sleep; manipulated his own journey to the supreme chancellor's office; orchestrated the Clone Wars; betrayed Count Dooku to gain Anakin Skywalker as an apprentice; and hoped to have Luke Skywalker take Darth Vader's place. Given his past, Palpatine had no qualms about ignoring the Rule of Two. In fact, creating Snoke to act as an intermediary between Kylo Ren and himself stood as a way to circumvent the direct link between a master and his apprentice.

Thus, the notion of using Force-sensitive beings to do his bidding was familiar to Palpatine. On top of this, the Inquisitors and the Knights of Ren were not technically Sith anyway. Of course, with their red lightsabers and Force abilities, it would be easy to mistake the Inquisitors for Sith. Unlike the Knights of Ren, whose capabilities were limited due to a lack of proper training, the Inquisitors' history as former Jedi, Padawans, and younglings meant they could harness the Force to a greater extent than their counterparts who followed Kylo Ren.

That being said, the Knights of Ren did wield the Force to varying degrees when facing off with their enemies. Candidates who hoped to join the Knights of Ren needed to have a connection to "the shadow," their term for the dark side. From the vibroscythe-brandishing Vicrul, whose Force sensitivity increased his ferociousness during combat, to the ax-swinging Ap'lek, who could sense his foes' presence, each Knight of Ren applied their dark-side abilities in a rudimentary fashion.

Where Loyalties Lie

To further illustrate the influence of the Sith, consider that they had many other loyalists, known as Sith cultists, who were *not* Force sensitive. For example, Kylo Ren made quick work of the Alazmec of Winsit, devotees to the dark side who guarded the area near Darth Vader's castle on Mustafar and tried to prevent Ren from attaining a Sith wayfinder.

On Exegol, Palpatine's legions of cultists formed the Sith Eternal and indoctrinated their children into becoming Sith troopers and crew members on Sith Star Destroyers. From intergalactic armies and fellow Sith to Inquisitors and the Knights of Ren, Palpatine proved he was willing to use anyone in his quest for ultimate power, even if his methods did not explicitly adhere to the Rule of Two.

DARK-SIDE DEEDS

1,032 BSW4:
As the last surviving Sith, Darth Bane recognized that infighting had been a major factor in the fall of the Sith and enacted the Rule of Two.

19 BSW4:
Supreme Chancellor Palpatine's devious machinations spelled doom for Count Dooku when the secret Sith Lord encouraged Anakin Skywalker to execute Dooku in cold blood.

9 ASW4:
In response to the capture of young Leia Organa, Tala Durith and Obi-Wan Kenobi infiltrated Fortress Inquisitorius, the Inquisitors' seemingly impenetrable command center on the moon of Nur.

3 BSW4:
Kanan Jarrus, Ezra Bridger, and Ahsoka Tano formed a brief alliance with Palpatine's former apprentice Maul before traveling to the Sith temple on Malachor. There, they were confronted by Inquisitors the Fifth Brother, Seventh Sister, and Eighth Brother.

28 ASW4:
Ben Solo joined the Knights of Ren in the wake of his destruction of Luke Skywalker's Jedi temple. Ren, the group's leader, eventually challenged Solo, who took the opportunity to take his place as the Knights' commander and assume the name Kylo Ren.

35 ASW4:
Having rejected the dark side, Ben Solo traveled to Exegol to aid Rey in her battle against the reborn Emperor Palpatine. Along the way, he battled the Knights of Ren, ultimately striking down all six of his former enforcers.

Allies of The Light

The Jedi had their own allies who, while not Force users, maintained special connections with the light side. As a member of the Church of the Force, Lor San Tekka supplied Luke Skywalker with information about many ancient Jedi traditions that he had gathered in his travels as an explorer.

Though best known for operating her establishment on Takodana, Maz Kanata forged a mysterious bond with the Force, even coming into possession of the Skywalker lightsaber. Kanata recognized Rey's importance and believed the scavenger should take ownership of the weapon.

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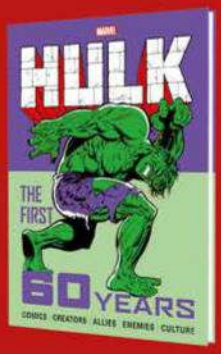

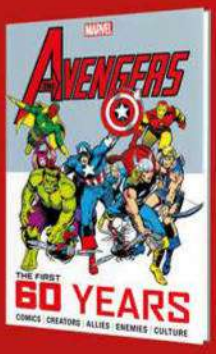

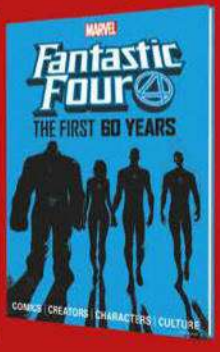

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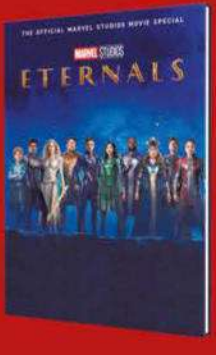

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TOOKA TROOPERS

Crocheting clones solidifies a family's *Star Wars* bond

Jeffrey Walker and his son cherish their time together, especially when they gather to read about and watch *Star Wars*. "Our favorite series is *The Clone Wars*," says Walker. "We were watching 'Innocents of Ryloth,' where troopers Waxer and Boil befriend a little Twi'lek girl named Numa, and she had a purple and gold tooka doll."

The classic story arc energized Walker's creativity, and he asked his son if he'd like his own tooka doll—a cuddly toy that was popular among other children in the galaxy, including *Rogue One: A Star Wars Story*'s Jyn Erso and *The Bad Batch's* Omega. His son agreed, so long as his father could "make it cool." Walker had learned to crochet from his mother over 30 years before, and he began making *Star Wars amigurumi* after his wife gave him a crochet kit in 2018. Armed with this knowledge, as well as his experience with creating and modifying patterns to fuel his passion for crocheting *Star Wars* characters, Walker set to work pairing the tooka doll design with some clone-inspired details.

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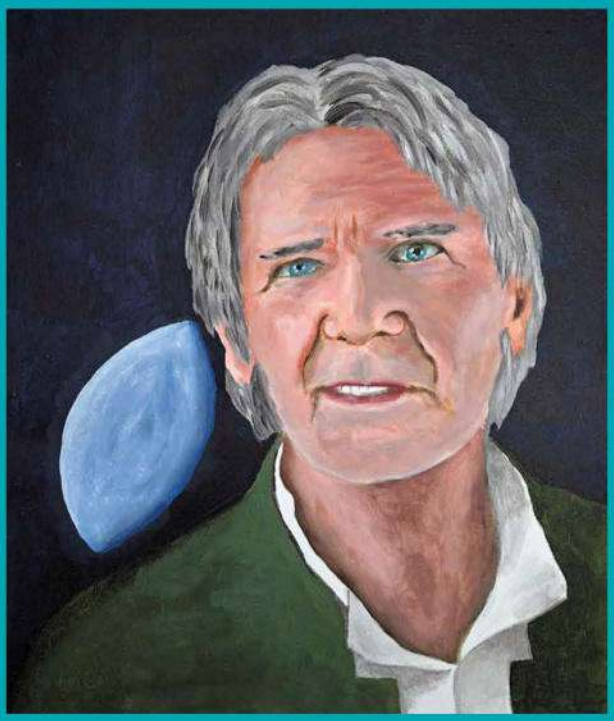
"At the time, there wasn't much reference about tooka dolls," notes the fan, who decided to custom design the body, combining the tooka doll's signature shape with the armor patterns of several iconic clone troopers. The result would have made the Grand Army of the Republic proud. Captain Rex, Commander Cody, and a trooper from the 327th emerged to fill the ranks of Jeffrey's crochet collection. Crucially, though, what was his son's verdict? Well, although Walker has crocheted an incredible number of *Star Wars* pieces over the years, his tooka dolls remain his son's favorite *Star Wars* creations.

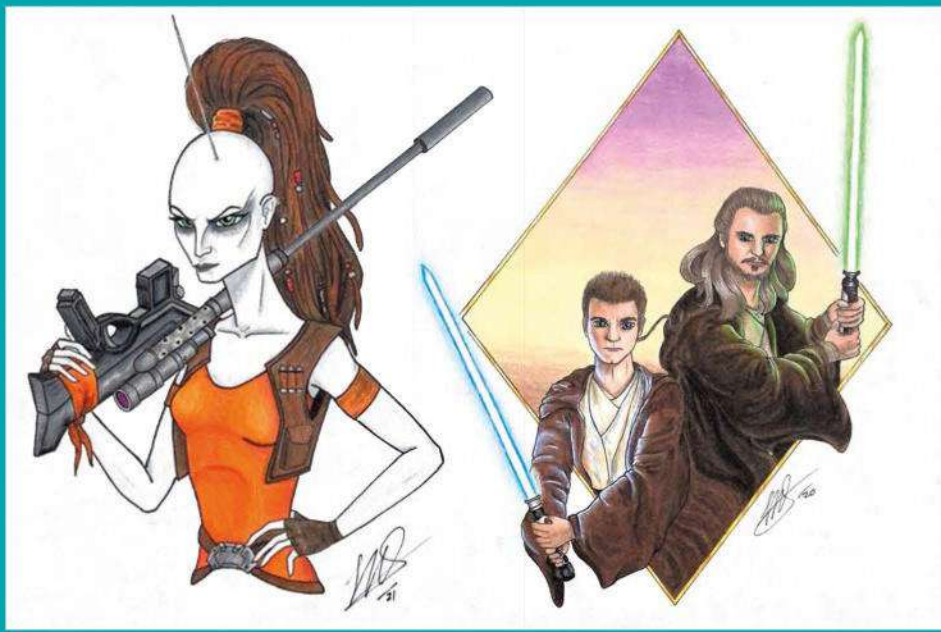
ARTISTS' ALLEY

Talented *Star Wars* fans share their amazing drawings inspired by the galaxy far, far away....

01 "HAN SOLO" BY KRISJANIS PAPINS

"Harrison Ford has many faces, but for me, he is foremost Han Solo," says fan artist Krisjanis Papins. "When I paint a person, I try to communicate the personality, by adding some personal detail. I sometimes say, 'Faces are easy, the background is hard,' because it takes me days to contemplate before I decide upon what characterizes this person the best." Inspiration struck Krisjanis, and he chose to incorporate a moon into his Han Solo art.





02 "QUI-GON & OBI-WAN" AND "AURRA SING" BY MAGGIE

After reading Claudia Gray's *Star Wars: Master and Apprentice*, Maggie felt compelled to commemorate Qui-Gon Jinn and Obi-Wan Kenobi. "Getting to read more of their relationship beyond what we saw in *The Phantom Menace* was really fantastic," she says. Drawn to unique designs, the fan conveyed her *The Clone Wars* love through Aurra Sing. "The drawing gave me a chance to play around a bit with my art style and embrace certain imperfections within it."

BOUNTY HUNTERS

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KATEE SACKHOFF & NIKA FUTTERMAN:

Scott Hume poses with Katee Sackhoff, who portrayed Bo-Katan Kryze in *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*, *Star Wars Rebels*, and *The Mandalorian*.

When Scott Hume attended the Voices Against Cancer pop-culture convention in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, he was thrilled at the chance to meet Katee Sackhoff, known for playing Bo-Katan Kryze in *Star Wars: The Mandalorian*.

"She was extremely kind and seemed genuinely excited to be there," Hume recalls. "It was a wonderful experience to be able to thank her not only for her work on *Star Wars* but for other shows she has starred in over the years."

The *Star Wars* extravaganza didn't stop there, as Hume cites getting a selfie with Nika Futterman, who voiced Asajj Ventress, as another favorite moment. Having also spent time with voice-acting legends Dee Bradley Baker and Sam Witwer at the event, each of whom signed his *The Clone Wars* poster, Hume is already preparing for next year. "It was a great day and I hope to be able to attend this con again!"

Scott Hume takes a selfie with Nika Futterman, who voiced Asajj Ventress in *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*.

CITY CELEBRATION

London turns a lifelong dream into reality

As someone who has been a *Star Wars* fan for over thirty years, Dennis Quepe has always had attending *Star Wars* Celebration on his bucket list, but lengthy flight times made visiting the United States from his home in the Philippines quite difficult. When the official *Star Wars* convention came to London in 2023, the fan was finally able to live his dream.

"The highlights were the photo opportunities and autograph sessions," remarks Dennis. He and his wife enjoyed meeting and talking with *Star Wars* writers and comic-book artists, who signed several items for the couple. Catching up with fellow fans proved to be another exciting opportunity for Dennis and his wife. "It was great meeting the cosplayers as well, and they were always open to having photos taken with them."

The U.K. setting provided an additional benefit, as the pair took time to explore London before heading home. For Dennis, the convention lived up to the hype. "My wife and I were there for all four days of Celebration, maximizing our trip to London, and each day was a different experience for us."

THE WRECKER EFFECT

Finding therapeutic fun in clone cosplay

Eric Moran traces his love for *Star Wars* back to 1979, when he was 8 years old. Years later, when Moran embarked on his cosplay journey, he wanted to make a connection with the legends he portrayed and craft builds around *Star Wars* characters who look like him. "Anytime I get to cosplay a character from the films or series is a major treat for me," he reveals. "Cosplaying as Wrecker and Boba Fett were ideal for me on both fronts."

The Bad Batch's Wrecker and the infamous bounty hunter Boba Fett appealed to Eric in different ways. "Wrecker is a big guy with a big heart, at the same time totally loyal to his squad of brothers. I can identify with him as a U.S. Marine, and being a big guy with a gentle soul," says the fan. "Boba Fett was always one of the coolest *Star Wars* characters when I was growing up, so to see that he looked like me with hair and—years later—*without* hair made it a no-brainer to cosplay as Boba."

Cosplaying is more than a hobby to Eric, as he's found solace in his post-military career. "I find working on my Boba Fett and Wrecker cosplays to be very therapeutic," he reveals. "Especially as I've had to deal with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)." The reception from other fans has also been a boost. "When I've cosplayed as those characters, the fan response has been overwhelmingly positive," says Moran, who has enjoyed seeing his cosplays go viral.

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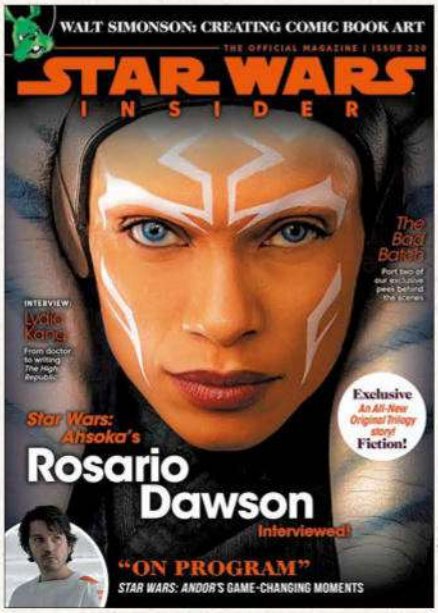

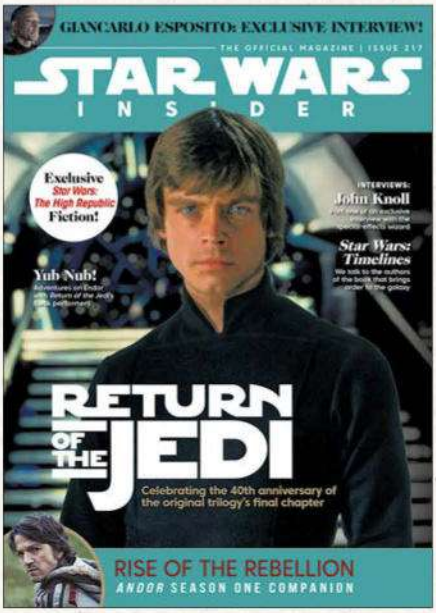
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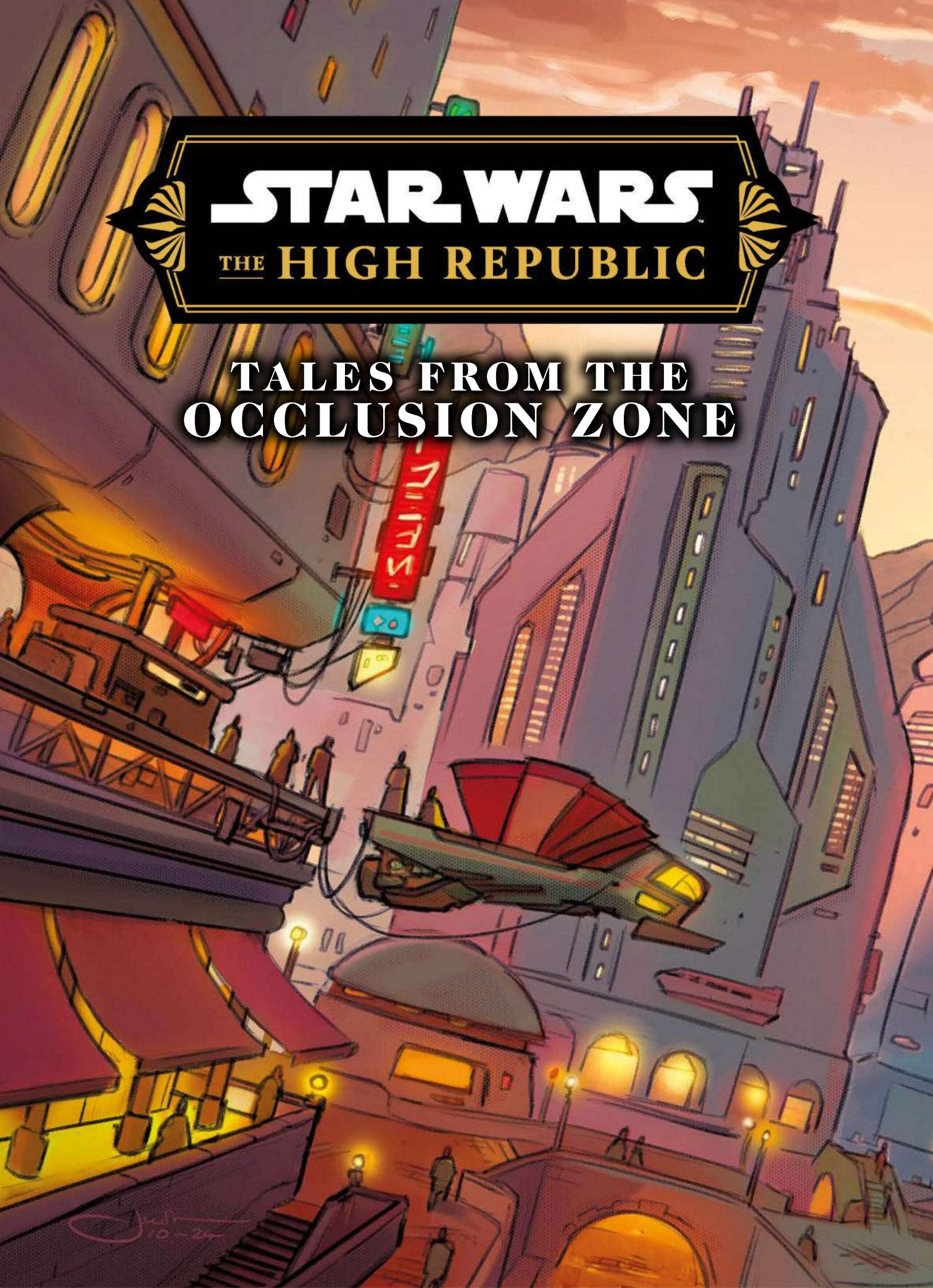
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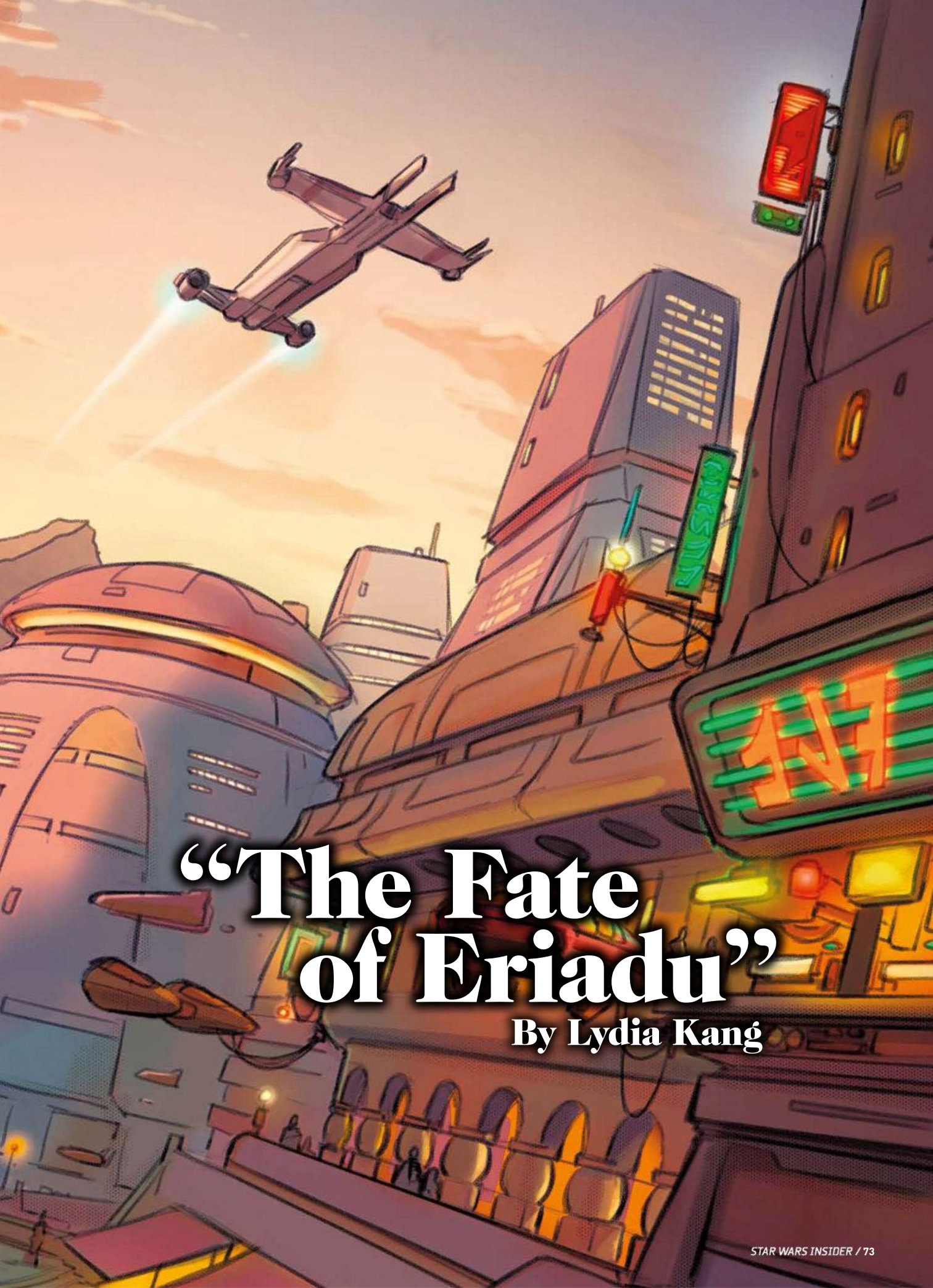
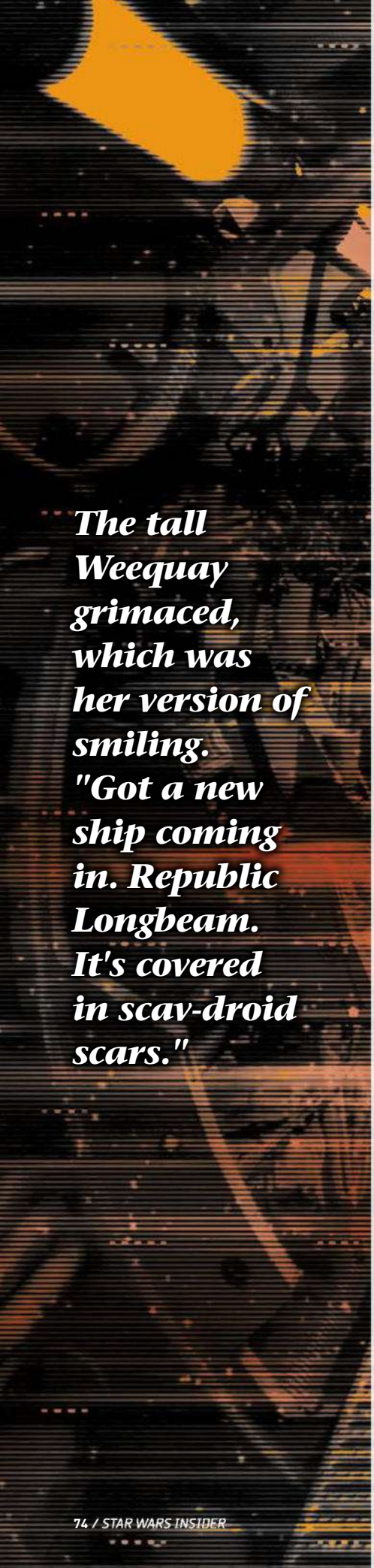


“The Fate of Eriadu”

By Lydia Kang



The tall Weequay grimaced, which was her version of smiling. "Got a new ship coming in. Republic Longbeam. It's covered in scav-droid scars."

Previously, in a galaxy far, far away….

The Republic Defense Coalition crew trapped inside the Occlusion Zone has traveled far to find a safe haven as supplies run dangerously low. With Pikka closing in on her due date and the survivors on the *Aurie* in ragged shape, they've finally made it. But Eriadu may not be the sanctuary they were hoping for…

Skrood licked the meat juices off his fingers as he rested his metal-clad boots on the control panel of the *Sickle*. He chose not to eat with the rest of his Nihil crew, as he was a suspicious commander. He might be poisoned, or worse, his food might be swiped when he wasn't looking. Skrood was smallest of his crew, which was common enough when you were a Lannik, but he'd sliced and hacked off enough fingers, noses, and appendages to fight for his rank. Diminutive or not, he was a vicious, dirty fighter. He gnawed off the last bits of flesh from the roast foot of the siler—some striped beast from Eriadu that the Nihil culled by the dozens to feed themselves—and followed with a sonorous, wet burp.

As if she'd been signaled with the gastric vocalization, one of his Nihil underlings appeared. The tall Weequay grimaced, which was her version of smiling.

"Got a new ship coming in. Republic Longbeam. It's covered in scav-droid scars."

"Excellent. I'm boarding this one. Last time you killed too many and we lost bargaining chips."

The Weequay grunted at the criticism, then punched at the communications controls of the *Sickle*. The Longbeam responded immediately by opening its comms channel.

Skrood smiled internally. *So pathetically eager to give up, these Republic vermin.*

"You are an unidentified vessel in Nihil space," Skrood said. "Surrender and prepare to be boarded, by order of Marchion Ro, the Eye of the Nihil. Your crew and your ship will hereafter belong to the Nihil. If we allow you to live, you will be confined to the planet of Eriadu until further notice." Skrood knew his voice was harsh and triumphant. Steady. The voice of someone who was winning a war.

As the *Sickle* and fifteen other Nihil ships orbited the brown and blue planet of Eriadu, now comfortably within the Occlusion Zone, this ship's passengers had little choice. The Nihil were well-fed, well-equipped, and always prepared for a fight.

There was a long pause. What was there to think of? Die, or be subjugated.

A woman's voice spoke from the Longbeam.

"This is the Republic Defense Coalition Longbeam designation *Aurora III*. We accept the terms of surrender."

She sounded exhausted and defeated. *How very excellent*, he thought.

A ragtag group including Skrood and ten Nihil—all wearing battle-scarred, mismatched armor and masks, with a single, unifying blue, spiral, angry eye—boarded the Longbeam. Despite having done this multiple times before, they weren't quite sure what to expect. Some ships they'd captured had dozens of crewmembers who fought back; others had only corpses of inhabitants who had starved to death or died of battle injuries.

The crew of the Longbeam were something in between.

There were only five, plus a shiny silver protocol droid. One was a human female with curled brown hair and heavily gravid, and the only one who appeared healthy. Two human males, both with starved looks in their eyes: one tall and broad-shouldered, and one much younger with black hair. An Arkanian woman with a fierce

expression stared with her white eyes at the Nihil as if their very existence was an insult to *all* Arkanians. And finally, lying on a hover gurney, a sickly-looking Mon Calamari female wheezed with every painful breath. Her normally yellow eyes had paled to a color akin to watery mucus. The Nihil wouldn't have been surprised if she died right there in front of them.

The droid stepped forward. "I am See-Ohsixen, specially programmed for high-level communications, servicing the Tarkin family. I am delighted to be home, I might add, and—"

"His programming is irreversibly malfunctioning," Joss warned. "But you're welcome to have him."

"*Malfunctioning?* I would very much like to rebut that statement! I am in *magnificent* condition! The caliber of my circuits is pristine and beyond dispute! I am categorically perfect in every way and I..."

"You can have him if you want," the human woman said, rather dryly.

Skrood looked at the droid and waved his hand, like C-06N was damaged goods. "State your name and rank," Skrood barked at the rest of them.

"We have...no rank," the woman said. "I am Pikka Adren. This is Joss Adren, Elping Tsoo, Visma Tarko, and Ghal Tarpfen."

"You really expect us to believe those are your real names? And that you're not RDC? In this ship?" Skrood asked, scrutinizing them. They certainly weren't wearing uniforms. They all looked like service crew. Still, they could have torn off their insignias.

"We were only delivering this Longbeam to Eriadu, when we were overtaken by the expansion. We've been stranded ever since," the taller male said.

"Search the vessel," Skrood said. "Take everything."

The Nihil scattered, ransacking all the compartments, finding a single serviceable blaster, a few nearly empty bags of protein powder, dried fruit, and vitamin packets. One well-worn game of Shah-tezh. Even the medical fluid supplies of intravenous dextrose had been drunk. The crew looked like they were ready to eat the walls of the ship. Skrood studied them. The others had starved so the gravid one could have more to eat. Ah, they were tender hearted. What a horrific sentiment. Now, they looked like they could barely stand. He laughed at them, and the sound of his mirth made them wince.

"Skrood," said one of his soldiers. "We have a record of one of these names in our system. Ghal Tarpfen. She was our prisoner who was on that transport that went adrift some months ago and...succumbed."

"She's as good as dead," the Weequay Nihil said, sneering. "Eriadu is a prison anyway. *Our* prison. Enjoy your slow death."

Pikka took control of the *Aurie* as soon as the Nihil were gone. They left a rancid smell in the air that made her feel queasy. Thank the stars they weren't feeling bloodthirsty. None of them were in shape for combat right now.

"I can't believe they let us through," Pikka said.

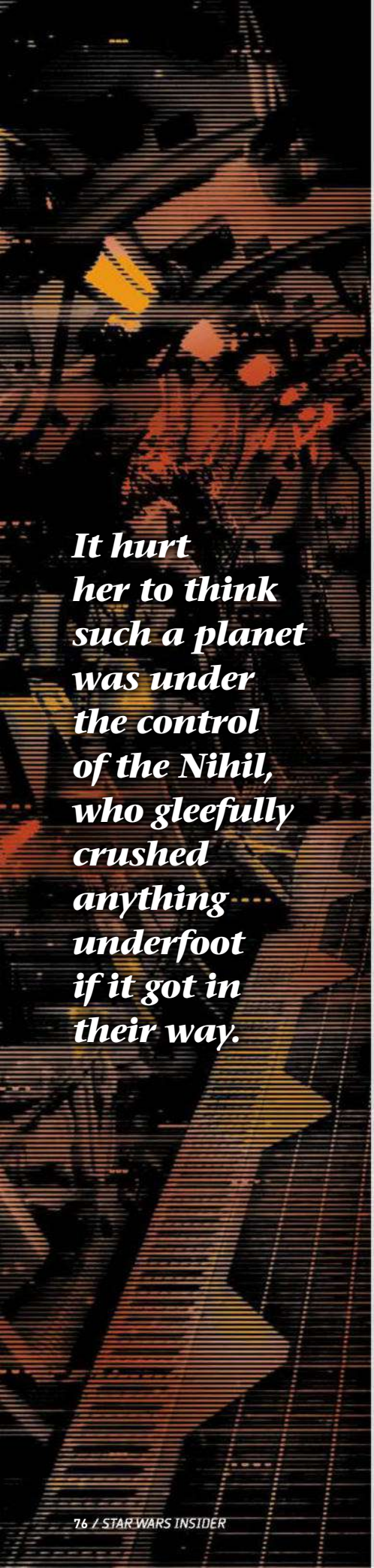
"Sometimes the truth is the best plan of action," Joss said. "Saved them the energy of an argument."

"And a bloody mess. They are so drunk on power, I think that murder has gotten boring," Pikka said. She thrust her chin forward. "Hey. There it is. Eriadu."

Over her shoulder, Joss leaned on her pilot's chair and stared at the enlarging green and brown marble of a planet before a spray of stars. Pikka put a hand on her belly and looked at her husband. Her beautiful Joss, usually strong as a lifter droid, thinning from starvation. His hands had balled into fists, ready to fight. Always ready to defend. But this time, they had to land on Eriadu no matter the cost. The Nihil ships were now far behind them. Visma and Elping appeared in the doorway of the cockpit.

"You don't sound relieved, Pikka," Visma said. They'd stopped using their RDC ranks for weeks now. The tightness of their quarters made honorifics and such seem ridiculous

Pikka put a hand on her belly and looked at her husband. Her beautiful Joss, usually strong as a lifter droid, thinning from starvation.



It hurt her to think such a planet was under the control of the Nihil, who gleefully crushed anything underfoot if it got in their way.

after a while. The Arkanian's cheekbones were sharp, and her once close-cropped hair now touched her shoulders as she crossed her arms.

Elping shrugged. The young RDC corporal had aged years in a few months and had lost the bright curiosity in his eyes. "Eriadu isn't the Eriadu from a few months ago."

As they descended towards the planet surface, Visma and Elping stared out the viewport. Pikka had noticed in the last few months the two younger RDC crewers in a detente of sorts. They fought less and often checked in on one another in silence, as if to make sure that they were, indeed, still alive. Still surviving.

Eriadu was a beautiful planet from above—mountainous areas, vast seas, and greenery that made Pikka feel almost hungry after so much time in space. The last time they'd been there, they were free. Now it hurt her to think such a planet was under the control of the Nihil, who gleefully crushed anything underfoot if it got in their way.

At first glance, Eriadu City and the neighboring Bri-Phrang seemed relatively unchanged, sprouting its metropolis around the inlet of the Orrineswa River and threading its borders into the wilder edges several kilometers out. But on closer view, there were scattered buildings that had crumbled into rubble, and fires smoldered here and there in what used to be homes. Ships flew low and cautiously over buildings of varying height and shapes, creating an irregular skyline. Pikka landed the *Aurie* at an airfield north of the city, crowded with vessels. Some ships appeared to have been pilfered by the Nihil for parts.

"We have to hide the *Aurie* as soon as we can," Joss said, and Pikka nodded in agreement. An Eriaduan man met them when they disembarked. Elping and Visma pushed the hover gurney with the weakened Ghal between them.

"We just got your clearance to land," the Eriaduan man said. "This is the *Aurora III*?" Joss nodded. "There's plenty of space here for you to keep your ship, though it can be confiscated by the Nihil at any time. Or worse—" he motioned to the ships that seemed to be missing entire engines, ion cannons, sections of fuselage, and hyperdrives.

"We need urgent medical assistance," Elping interrupted, "for this Mon Calamari. We think she's suffering from some profound vitamin deficiencies due to eating only human food for months."

He gave an appraising glance to their group and raised his eyebrows. "Looks like you *all* need medical help. How long were you in the O.Z.?"

"Too long," Visma said.

A woman in the distance shouted. A flaxen ponytail flew out behind her as she ran to the group. She wore baggy work pants and an oversized smock. She looked familiar, but Pikka couldn't place her.

"Joss! Pikka!" The woman embraced both of them and they awkwardly accepted the hug with arms stiff at their sides. After she'd released Joss, he squinted his eyes at her as if seeing through a haze of time and distance.

"Ensign Casset? Is that you?" he asked.

"Shh," she said. "No ranks. Not while we're being occupied. Just call me Ebbe."

She seemed older by years since they'd last said goodbye to her right here on Eriadu, before that fateful day when they'd left to investigate a Nihil ship, only to get swept into the Occlusion Zone. Her clothes made her look like an ordinary citizen on Eriadu, but her upright posture told them she was still RDC to the core.

"I thought you were all dead," she said. Her eyes were glassy. "I thought I'd sent you both—and your little one—to a death sentence."

"It wasn't your order. It was Kronara's. And our decision," Pikka said. "No one could have predicted the Occlusion Zone was going to expand like that."

"But it was my idea," she admitted.

"It doesn't matter," Joss said. "Right now, we have other things to worry about. Like Ghal."

The Eriaduan in charge of their processing looked at his datapad, running the list with their IDs. His face went pale, and his eyes widened.

"Ghal…Ghal Tarpfen? The Head of Security from the Starlight Beacon?" His mouth dropped open. "I thought—I thought—"

"I am not dead, but I will be if you keep gawking," Ghal rasped, her pale eyes reddened at the edges.

Ebbe yelled sharply to a group of medics nearby, who came running. They whispered to each other as they approached her.

"Is it true? This is Ghal Tarpfen? She's actually alive?" said the taller one.

The other replied, "She was a hero when she was dead. She's a beacon of hope if she's alive."

Elping and Visma stayed at Ghal's side.

"We're not leaving her," Elping said.

"We're going to make sure she's okay, then find you later," Visma said. She lowered her voice. "We'll find out what the RDC is doing here. I think there are probably more hiding on Eriadu than we realize."

Ebbe spoke quietly too, glancing around with a paranoia that they all seemed to carry with them. "There are. And plenty of places for us to hide." She glanced behind her, but nobody was there there—only an Eriaduan mountain range beyond the city's borders. "We have to stay quiet for now." She looked at Elping and Visma. "We'll get you debriefed after you get some rest. I'll find you later."

Visma and Elping followed the medics to a shelter nearby.

Pikka frowned. "I hope they remember to get a square meal and take a shower. They stink."

"We're not smelling that much better," Joss said. The sound of clanging came from inside the *Aurie*, and C-06N emerged, arms up and making a direct line to Ebbe.

"Finally! I shall be reunited with the Tarkin family! It has been a trial, these last months."

"Really? You weren't semi-starving, Sixen," Joss said.

"Worse, I have been cohabitating with people who have no respect for my translational skills."

"We saved you from being Nihil scrap metal." Pikka rolled her eyes. "Take him. Please."

Ebbe waved the droid forward. "We'll return you back to one of the Tarkin households," she said. "Head to that hangar over there for eval and processing." C-06N walked away so fast he was a blur of metal legs and waving arms. "Come on. I'm walking you to the infirmary to get checked out. And then…"

"And then, we lay low," Pikka said. Though they were no longer on the run, she felt anything but safe. "Find a place to live. Hide the *Aurie*. And figure out our next steps."

Three weeks had passed.

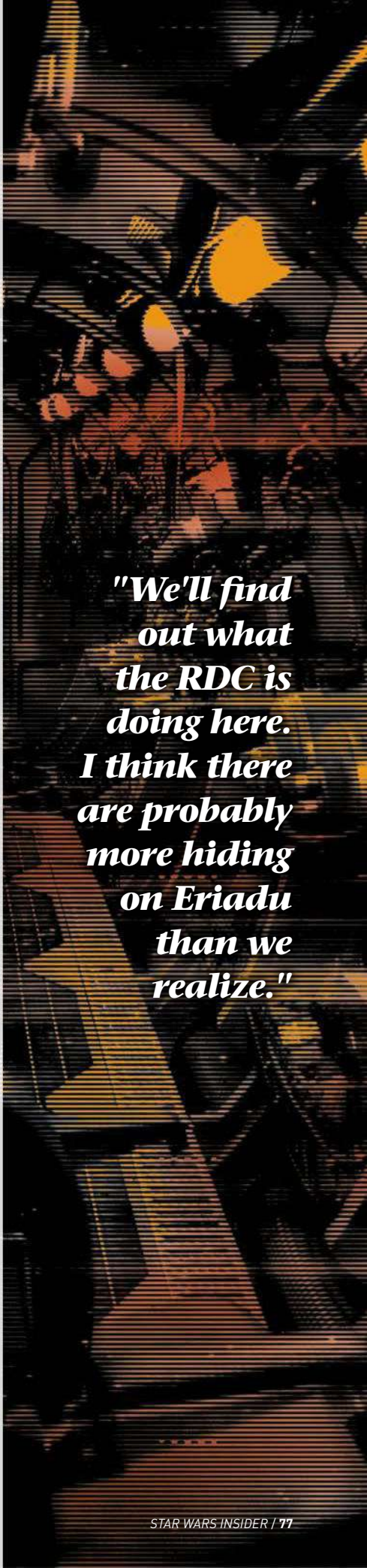
Joss had woken up inside their tiny quarters on the outskirts of Eriadu City. It wasn't much, but it did the job. A small bedroom, a space with a kitchen, place to eat, and a long workbench that spanned an entire wall, where they continued to make a vast number of repairs that the *Aurie* needed. After so many scav-droid attacks, there was plenty to do. Joss and Pikka had found a small space nearby that served as a hangar for the Longbeam.

Joss made himself a large caf and breakfast for Pikka, whose belly was seemingly enlarging every day. She sat down at the tiny table and sighed, her curly dark hair rumpled and gorgeous. Another day alive. Joss chose to lean against the wall and stare out a long, narrow window barely wide enough to stick his hand out of. He liked to look at the mountains and get a glimpse of green when he could.

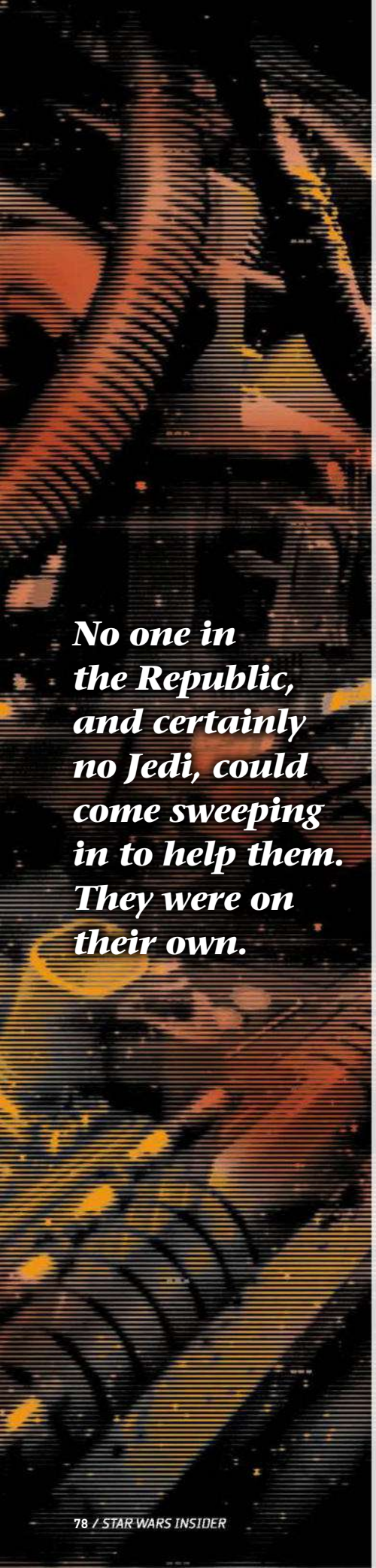
"You know, we haven't had a chance to talk to Ebbe in a few days."

"She's busy." Pikka gave her husband a meaningful look.

Ever since Ebbe had quietly mentioned it, Joss and Pikka had carefully asked around. It was Elping and Visma who ended up telling them the truth—that the RDC had stashed several ships and hidden RDC personnel inside the abandoned lommite mines and hidden mountainous passageways. Those mountains *looked* uninhabited. No buildings, no houses. Just scars from the lommite mines, but beneath



"We'll find out what the RDC is doing here. I think there are probably more hiding on Eriadu than we realize."



No one in the Republic, and certainly no Jedi, could come sweeping in to help them. They were on their own.

them was an arsenal. Waiting… for something.

Just then, there was a knock at the door.

Pikka and Joss froze, his mug stopping halfway to his mouth.

They had been careful to live quietly in Eriadu City, where the Nihil might sweep in at any moment to take all your things or throw you into confinement. Mostly, the Nihil seemed to leave the Eriaduans alone, but Joss and Pikka had already been subject to one raid and had gotten away unscathed. But now they had other reasons to worry.

Knowing there were more RDC than the Nihil knew existed felt like a shout on the tip of Joss's tongue, and yet he had to keep his mouth shut. Even Ebbe Casset couldn't tell them what the plan was. Plus, they didn't know if they had enough support from Eriaduans to overthrow the Nihil. And even if they did, Eriadu was still in the Occlusion Zone. No one in the Republic, and certainly no Jedi, could come sweeping in to help them. They were on their own, and currently, an uprising might be tantamount to suicide. But they were ready for the call, and that made their existence all the more precarious. They *knew* things now.

Someone knocked again on the door.

Joss stood up, quietly took his blaster where it was stowed beneath their bed. He'd carefully hidden his WESTAR under a bolted section of the *Aurie* so the Nihil wouldn't discover it, and now he hid it in a holster against his left ribs. He touched a screen by the door where Pikka had rigged a camera showing them a view of the hallway outside their quarters, as well as the alley behind the building. Just in case.

It was Visma and Elping. Elping was holding a basket.

"We come bearing gifts!" Visma said.

Joss opened the door and they entered, handing over their gift of hard-to-get fruit and a small jug of jogan juice, Pikka's favorite.

"Good to see you!" Pikka said, waving them in. Just as the door closed, a silver droid arm prevented it from closing, and C-06N barged in.

"Sixen! What are you doing here?" Pikka said, so surprised she nearly dropped the juice. She looked at Visma and Elping. "Is this what you meant by 'gifts'?"

Visma frowned. The Arkanian woman had shorn her hair short again and appeared so much stronger than when they'd landed. Good. She wore an old RDC uniform with the insignia ripped off.

"I have been to several Tarkin abodes—so beautifully designed—nothing like the squalor I have lived in these past weeks and months—"

Here, Joss was very tempted to reach over and shut off the droid for insulting the *Aurie*. Pikka gave him a warning look and he backed down.

"—and the Tarkins have decided that my services are no longer of use, and I may be deployed to other acquaintances." The droid looked at Joss and Pikka. "The Adrens."

"Oh, no." Pikka waved her hands around. "There's hardly room here. Why don't you stay with Elping? Or Visma?"

"He has," Elping said. He closed his eyes for a full few seconds, and Joss knew he was *this far* away from tossing the droid in a dustbin. "For two weeks now. Fourteen days. Twenty thousand, one-hundred and sixty minutes after he was fired."

"I was not *fired*," the droid said irritably. "The Tarkins are so well-versed in social and political communication that I was simply superfluous to their excellent discourse. Though I tried at every instance to intersperse my nuanced understanding of tactical wordplay and subtle repartee—"

"Ywareah," Visma said, rolling her eyes. "He was fired."

"And now you're trying to bribe us with jogan juice to keep him?" Joss said, arms crossed.

"Please?" Visma said, wringing her hands. Her white irises darted between Joss and Pikka. "We have a lot of work to do." She lowered her voice. "And we need to keep things quiet. The last thing that Sixen is good at."

Pikka gave Joss a look that said, *I will murder that droid if he stays here.*

Joss cleared his throat. "Tell you what. We might need more help

after the baby comes. How about in one month?" He leaned to Pikka and whispered, "Maybe we figure out how to alter his programming by then."

"One month," Pikka said, decisively. "In the meantime, perhaps you could shut him down for a bit to preserve his, ah, circuits? I hear Eriadu can get very dusty in certain areas and cause a rapid decay of certain processing units."

It was decided then, though Elping and Visma both looked so disappointed. They found out that Ghal was feeling much better after reverting to a Mon Calamari diet of Eriaduan crustacean soup and proper vitamin supplements. Joss longed to go with them and find out more about what the RDC was able to do while hiding on Eriadu, but Pikka was already looking like she was getting a stellar headache. And he had some work to do on the *Aurie*.

He watched Elping and Visma leave and couldn't help but think they seemed more like siblings now. When they'd first met the two young RDC officers, Visma was constantly berating the younger Elping, who didn't at all seem like he ever belonged in the RDC. But Visma had mellowed by the harsh months in the O.Z., and Elping had matured. He had a terrible, foreboding feeling as he watched them walk away, as if he might not see them again.

Joss shook his head. *Don't start with catastrophic imaginings. Get some work done. Take care of Pikka and the baby. Figure out what our next move is.*

Which was either as a parent to a newborn child or as a participant in a war. Or, more likely, both.

A few hours later, Pikka could tell Joss felt antsy. He didn't say it out loud, but she knew he felt what she felt. That he wanted desperately to do something except hide and stay low in this dingy dwelling, in this city that didn't belong to its people. But right now, she desperately needed rest. What she wanted to do and what this baby wanted to do were often entirely different things. Usually, the baby won.

When Joss was making way too much noise trying to fix a navigational circuit, or getting a snack, or heck—just *existing*—she called out to him.

"Joss, I think you need to take a walk. Get some air. I gotta get some rest for an hour or two."

He nodded and kissed her gently. As he left the bedroom, she watched him leave. Joss with those huge shoulders, that height, those feet that made *so much noise*. For a fleeting second, she had a premonition.

What if I don't see him *again? What if the Nihil get him? What if—*

But then she remembered.

Don't start with catastrophic imaginings. Get some work done. Take care of Joss and this baby. Figure out our next move.

And right now, the next move was a nap. In her dreams, she was holding her breath as the Nihil gathered around the *Aurie*, feeling certain that they were truly going to die. But the Nihil ships had not come to destroy the vessel, which had hidden for months inside the Occlusion Zone. They had gathered at the Stormwall and rushed forward when it had suddenly expanded. In the chaos of the expansion, the crew of the *Aurie* had reversed course and turned off their engines to hide quickly and quietly—and it had saved them. This time.

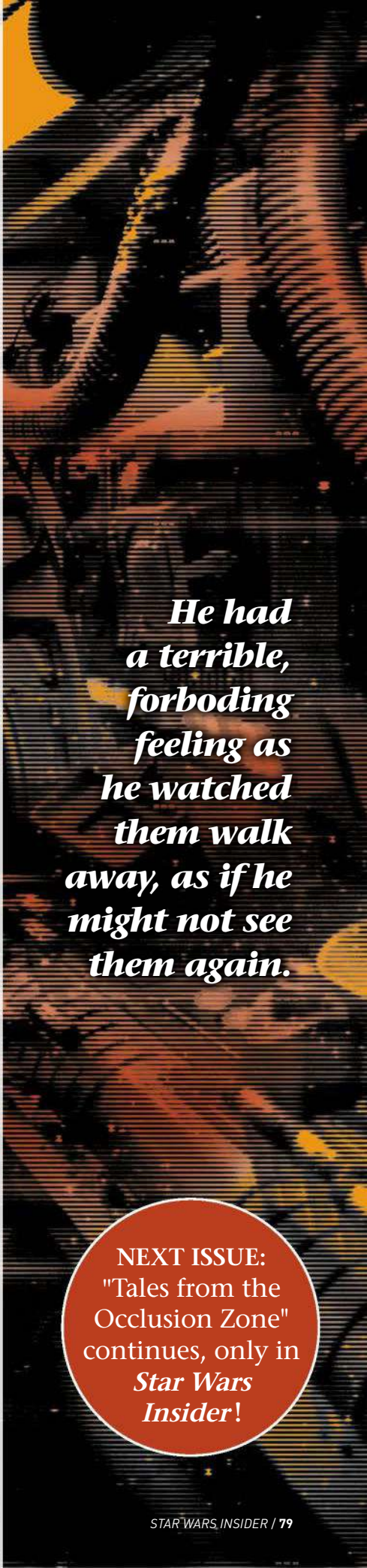
She stirred, realizing this was a memory, not a dream, and the child within her stretched and sprang back into a curled position. Pikka fell back asleep.

This time as she dreamed, she saw Eriadu on fire, the *Aurie* flying like the beautiful machine that she was, and she heard an explosion.

She heard another one.

And then she realized, perhaps she was not actually dreaming anymore. Her eyes flew open, heart pounding. Without thinking, Pikka threw open the door to their tiny living space to see very real smoke and fire rising in the heart of Eriadu City. The war had begun.

TO BE CONTINUED...



He had a terrible, forboding feeling as he watched them walk away, as if he might not see them again.

NEXT ISSUE: "Tales from the Occlusion Zone" continues, only in ***Star Wars Insider***!

JEDI MASTER'S QUIZ

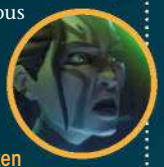
Star Wars: Tales of the Empire told the unique stories of Morgan Elsbeth and Barriss Offee, as they sought to find their way while the Empire established its dominance. Chart your own destiny in this issue's epic quiz.

Compiled by Jay Stobie

"FOR THE GLORY OF THE EMPIRE."

Overcome the odds to answer these *Tales of the Empire* questions.

THE MAGISTRATE'S MISSION



1: Who struck down Morgan Elsbeth's mother?
A/ Darth Vader
B/ General Grievous
C/ Count Dooku
D/ Darth Maul

2: Where was Morgan Elsbeth taken to following her mother's death?
A/ An asteroid colony
B/ An underwater base
C/ A space station
D/ A mountain settlement

3: What technology did Morgan Elsbeth pitch to the Empire?
A/ A new lightsaber design
B/ A cloaking device
C/ A homemade protocol droid
D/ An advanced starfighter

4: What did Morgan Elsbeth receive in return for aligning with Grand Admiral Thrawn?
A/ Several Star Destroyers
B/ A castle on Nal Hutta
C/ The Death Star plans
D/ A spice mine on Kessel

5: Why did Morgan Elsbeth execute the New Republic delegation?
A/ They forgot to bribe her
B/ Their ship was parked illegally
C/ They asked for her surrender
D/ Their uniforms were wrinkled

A FORMER PADAWAN'S PLIGHT

6: Where was Barriss Offee during Order 66?
A/ Vacationing on Mon Cala
B/ Stationed on a cargo ship
C/ Living on Lothal
D/ Confined in a cell

7: What did Barriss Offee use to kill her friend Dante?
A/ The Force
B/ A vibroblade
C/ Rancors
D/ A blaster

8: Why did Barriss Offee turn against the Fourth Sister?
A/ To impress the Emperor
B/ To demonstrate her power
C/ To earn a promotion
D/ To save a Jedi

9: What did Barriss Offee become after she left the Inquisitorius?
A/ A sabacc player
B/ A Mandalorian
C/ A healer
D/ A bounty hunter

10: Why did Barriss Offee believe the Fourth Sister would not escape the cave?
A/It was filled with gundarks
B/ An avalanche was coming
C/ She did not know the path
D/ The temperature was too high

THE EMPIRE AND ITS ENEMIES

11: Who observed Morgan Elsbeth's presentation?
A/ Admiral Piett
B/ Captain Pellaeon
C/ General Veers
D/ Moff Gideon

12: Why did Rukh attack Morgan Elsbeth?
A/ To test her
B/ To steal her spear
C/ To kill her
D/ To become the Magistrate

13: Who received Ambassador Nadura's final distress signal?
A/ Carson Teva
B/ Rose Tico
C/ Bo-Katan Kryze
D/ Han Solo

14: What name did the Fourth Sister previously go by?
A/ Depa Billaba
B/ Shaak Ti
C/ Yaddle
D/ Lyn Rakish

15: What did the Fourth Sister claim was her ally?
A/ Forgiveness
B/ Hope
C/ Fear
D/ Surprise

"THE EMPIRE IS A MAGNIFICENT CONSTRUCT."

Prepare for your destiny and find 10 key terms from *Tales of the Empire* below:

S	B	R	W	M	I	H	A	D	I	N	P	N	O
C	A	N	P	I	H	D	S	O	S	I	Y	J	A
G	M	E	L	K	N	F	N	E	W	G	I	T	Z
M	I	O	T	S	S	G	M	W	U	H	N	A	U
I	R	N	F	H	J	P	O	U	D	T	U	H	M
G	I	B	A	F	I	E	P	A	A	S	C	M	C
R	A	X	F	W	I	H	S	F	T	I	F	A	O
A	L	H	I	A	O	S	F	O	H	S	Q	R	Z
M	A	R	R	O	K	K	D	K	O	T	F	F	I
D	N	C	I	F	F	A	N	A	M	E	B	L	A
S	B	U	O	P	A	V	I	S	I	R	A	Q	H
O	R	A	N	R	N	L	A	N	R	N	A	K	W
C	C	F	F	I	V	T	R	R	K	Y	Q	U	N
I	J	E	I	N	Q	U	I	S	I	T	O	R	E
O	K	F	F	W	H	I	S	N	G	R	R	K	S

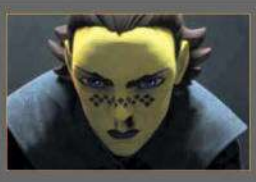
QUIZ ANSWERS:
1. B, 2. D, 3. D, 4. A, 5. C, 6. D, 7. A, 8. D, 9. C, 10. C, 11. B, 12. A, 13. C, 14. D, 15. C.

"THE EMPIRE IS A MAGNIFICENT CONSTRUCT"
1. Corvus, 2. Marrok, 3. Dathomir, 4. Wing, 5. Ahmar, 6. Nightsister, 7. Inquisitor, 8. Mot Isdain, 9. Nall, 10. Mirialan.

HOW DID YOU DO?

Did you succeed in your quest to correctly answer our *Tales of the Empire* questions?

0-9: It appears your path is set, yet victory continues to elude you.



10-19: Trust your path, you're journeying in the right direction.

20-25: Your way is true, as are your answers. Long live the Empire!

NEXT ISSUE

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STAR WARS INSIDER

230

Fanfare for the Common Droid

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Roger Christian
Tips on creating a used galaxy

Kelnacca Kaos
Actor Joonas Suotamo on *The Acolyte*'s Wookiee Jedi

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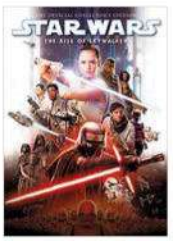

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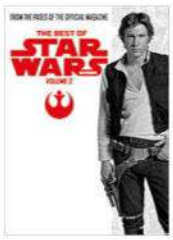

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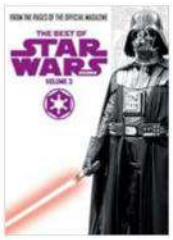

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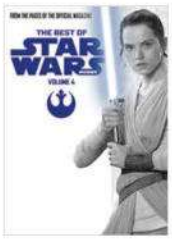

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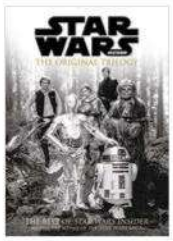

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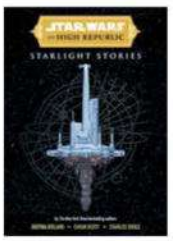

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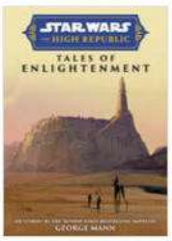

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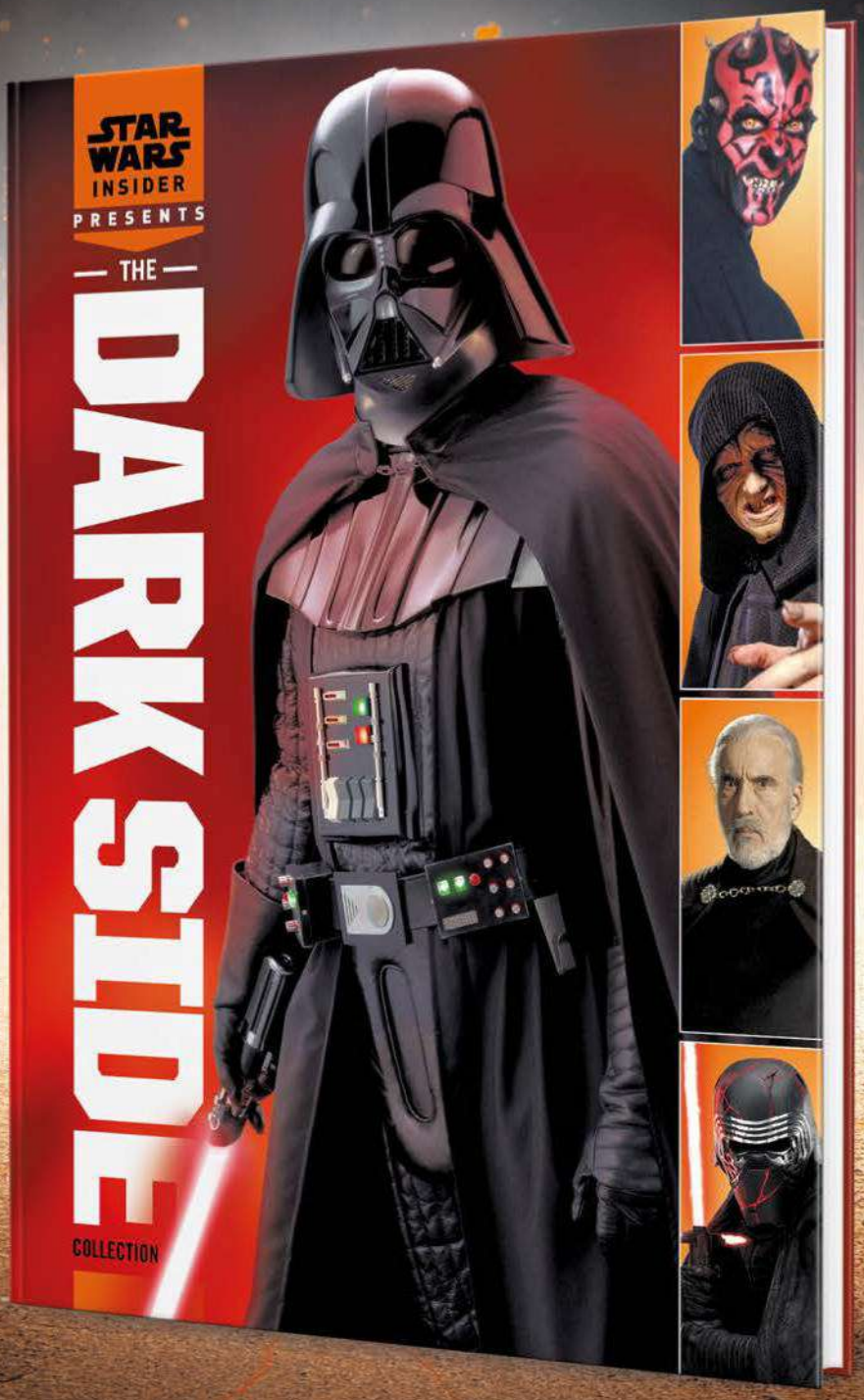

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